

THIRTEEN AMAZING TRUE STORIES ABOUT REAL GHOSTS

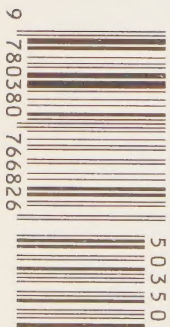
JAMES M. DEEM

author of *How to Find a Ghost*

GHOST HUNTERS



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GHOST HUNTERS

Other Avon Camelot Books by
James M. Deem

HOW TO FIND A GHOST

JAMES M. DEEM is the author of several books for young people, including *HOW TO FIND A GHOST* and *HOW TO CATCH A FLYING SAUCER*. As a child, James Deem used to check for ghosts in his bedroom every night. He lives in an unhaunted house in New Rochelle, New York, with his wife and four children.

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GHOST HUNTERS

JAMES M. DEEM

Illustrated by Michael David Biegel

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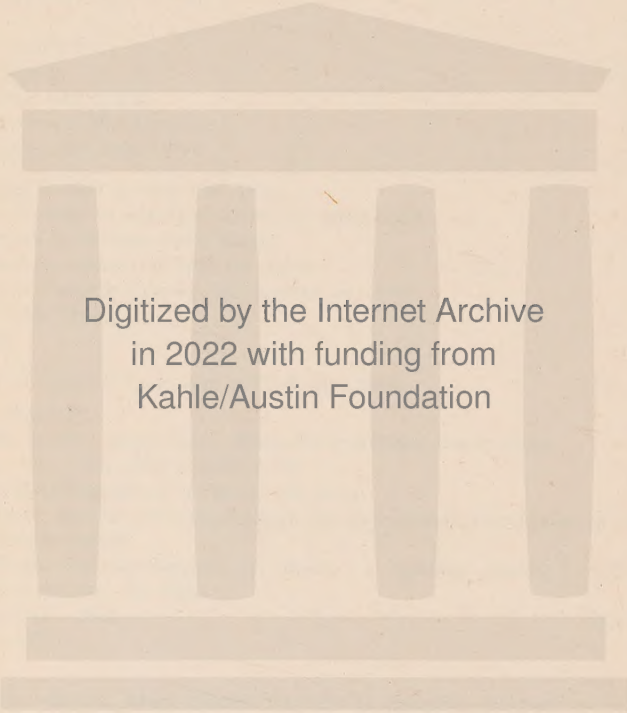
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For Rachel the Intrepid.



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GHOST HUNTERS

Introduction

A few years ago, I wrote a book entitled *How to Find a Ghost*. Since then, I have received hundreds of letters from children who have decided to become ghost hunters. Many have written to ask me for more information, so many in fact that I decided to write another book about ghosts and the ghost hunters who discovered them.

This book contains the experiences of thirteen people who became ghost hunters for one reason or another. Some were scientists who actually explored haunted houses and buildings, trying to measure the ghosts' activity and explain it. Others were researchers and writers who interviewed people haunted by ghosts and then wrote reports of the hauntings; sometimes they even encountered the ghost themselves. And a few were just ordinary people who found themselves in the middle of a haunting and were forced to conduct an investigation.

I have selected stories that each hunter says really happened, so these are not tall tales. How-

ever, real ghost stories are quite different from fictional ones. As you'll discover, real ghost stories are usually more puzzling than terrifying. Wherever possible, I have used the actual places and names of the people involved. Sometimes, when a person's name was not given to protect his or her identity, I have made one up. But in no case have I changed the location of the haunting. When I have used dialogue, it was either contained in or strongly suggested by the original account.

Before you read these real ghost stories, though, I'd like to answer a question that I am frequently asked:

"Do you believe in ghosts?"

Yes.

I have always believed in ghosts.

When I was a child, I searched for ghosts under my bed each night. I checked inside my closet and closed the door securely. I looked behind the bedroom door and made sure it was open as wide as possible, so that the hallway light would stream into my room and protect me. I was afraid that ghosts would "get" me during the night. I never knew how they would "get" me; I just knew they would.

Every summer, when I visited my grandmother, in her dark old house full of empty rooms, my fears multiplied. People had actually died in her house: my great-grandfather, for one, had had a heart attack and died on the green damask sofa (that my grandmother still sat on to watch TV) after dinner one night, a few years before I was born. A large

black-and-white photograph of my great-grandfather hung on the living room wall, and I was sure that he would come for me one night and "get" me.

For that reason, I not only wouldn't sit on the green sofa, I was also particularly worried about a locked room—now used for storage—that was definitely a breeding ground for ghosts.

What I didn't know then—and have come to realize now—is that ghosts don't stand around in hiding, waiting to scare nervous children. Instead, they go about their business. Some may try to communicate a message to the living, but most ghosts that are reported do nothing at all scary. Of course, this doesn't mean that the person who sees a ghost won't be scared, but that was probably not the ghost's intention.

So, yes, I believe that people see ghosts.

And, yes, I have seen a ghost.

This happened in England, in 1984. My wife and I were traveling through Yorkshire, and we stopped to see Richmond Castle. It is a large, sprawling ruin with a four-story keep that has been mostly restored. As we finished touring the second floor of the keep, I looked up a long, narrow flight of stone steps that led to the next floor. At the top of the stairs, I saw a woman in a pale blue dress walking past the top of the stairs. There were other tourists in the castle, and I thought nothing more of the lady. The third floor was empty, and after a few moments, we proceeded to the fourth floor. It was only then, when we had reached the top floor, that I realized we had not passed anyone else, let alone the lady in the blue dress.

I checked for another way down, but there was

none. I never found out where the lady in the blue dress had gone, but one thing was certain: I had seen her. Unfortunately, I couldn't remember anything about her, other than her blue dress, and I don't know if it looked old-fashioned or not. Still, I believe—although I have no proof—that she was a ghost.

All of the ghost hunters included in this book believe that the stories they reported involve real ghosts. As you read them, ask yourself what you would do to prove further that a real ghost was involved.

If you detect any ghosts after reading this book, write to me at the following address:

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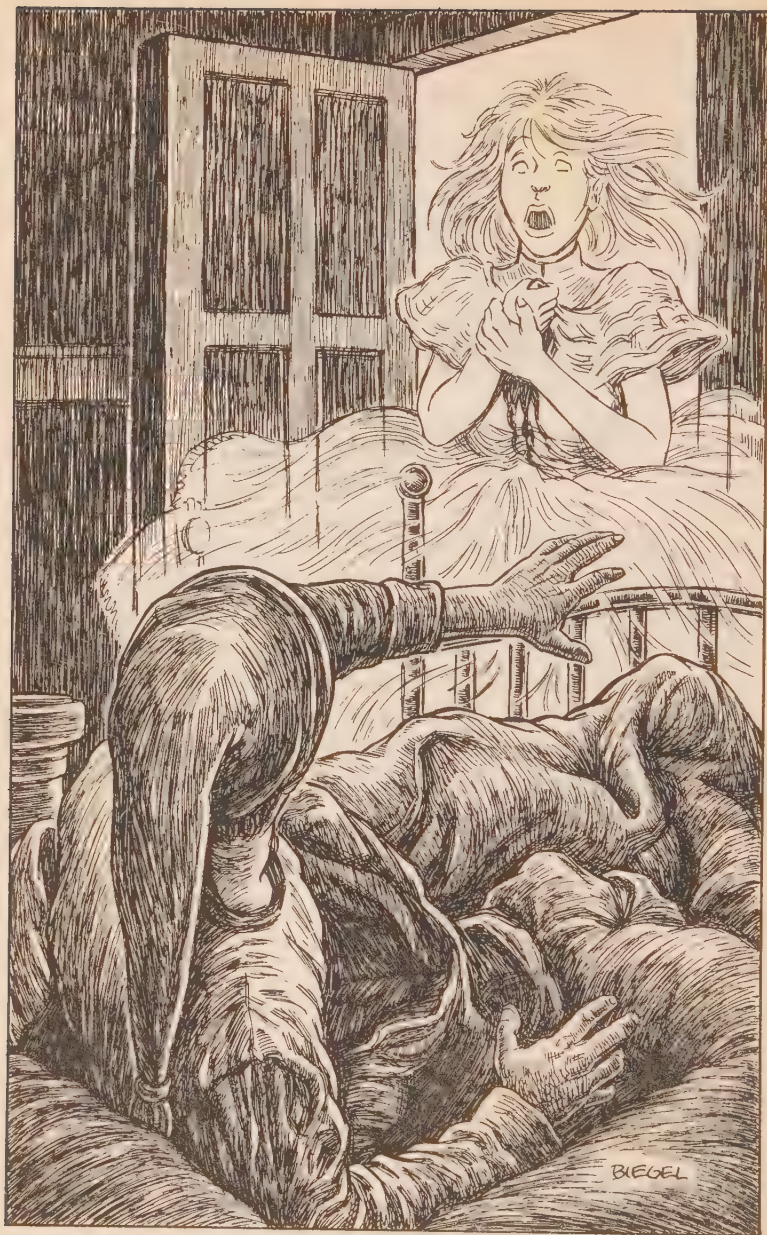
Happy ghost hunting!

Part I

GHOST HUNTERS:

Ordinary People

Sometimes ghosts are discovered by people who never wanted to become ghost hunters. These ordinary people usually encounter a ghost intent on conveying some type of message. Once the message is delivered, the ghost does not return. To solve the mystery of the haunting, though, these ordinary people are forced to take action and become ghost hunters.



1

Colonel Thomas Bushe: The Secret of the White Lady

Colonel Thomas Bushe served in the British army for much of his life. When he retired around 1850, he opened the old family home of Glencairn, located a few miles from Lismore, in southern Ireland. He imagined a quiet life of retirement; instead, he found that he had inherited a ghost. In order to get the peace and quiet that he wanted, he had to become, first and foremost, a ghost hunter.

Colonel Bushe did not believe in ghosts and went about the business of making the house livable. He tried to hire some local people to work as servants. Although they were willing to work there during the day, none would agree to sleep in the house at night.

This annoyed the Colonel. Rather than give in to their silly request, he hired servants from

other areas of Ireland, servants who knew nothing about the Glencairn ghost. But it wasn't long before they too asked to sleep elsewhere.

Colonel Bushe became impatient. He had seen no ghost and decided that his servants were jumping to conclusions.

"What are you afraid of?" he asked them.

They told him they had heard footsteps coming from the top floor of the house when no one was there. They had heard noises in the attic when the attic was empty. One servant also reported seeing a young woman in a white gown who disappeared as soon as she was spotted. After this, the ghost had become known as the White Lady of Glencairn.

The Colonel doubted their stories, but he wrote to an old friend, Wallace Simon, who was interested in ghosts and invited him for a visit. Mr. Simon arrived, but before he and the Colonel could work out a ghost-hunting plan, the ghost made its presence known.

On Mr. Simon's first night, he and the Colonel were awakened by the sound of doors opening and closing. They also heard footsteps on the floor above them, near the attic door. The next morning, they began their ghost hunt. They searched the upper floors carefully, but found nothing that could explain the noises. The Colonel wondered if the servants had been playing tricks on him.

After Mr. Simon left, the Colonel was still certain that no ghost existed. A few nights later, though, he was awakened by the sound of footsteps. Quickly he became a believer in the White Lady of Glencairn.

As he listened to the sound of footsteps approaching his bedroom door, Colonel Bushe decided that a servant must have come to fetch him for some emergency. When the footsteps stopped outside his door, he waited to hear a knock. Instead, the door handle turned and a young woman, dressed in a flowing white nightgown, stepped into his room and began to walk slowly toward his bed. The Colonel was so surprised that he couldn't speak. The woman clutched her chest with both hands. In the moonlight that streamed through the window, the Colonel saw a gaping wound in the center of her chest. Around her hands, he could see that her gown was soaked in blood. A moment later, she turned and ran from the room. The Colonel heard footsteps on the stairs, then the attic door opened and closed.

The Colonel now knew that the White Lady existed, but he wasn't afraid. He just wanted to put an end to the haunting. The next morning, he searched the attic carefully, since he suspected that the key to the ghost's secret must be there. He rummaged through old trunks and cartons before he came across a small wooden box. Inside, he found a smaller metal box which was tightly sealed. Next to the metal box was a tattered piece of paper on which a message was written.

The paper said the box had belonged to the daughter of a former owner of Glencairn who had died many years earlier in Rome. She wished the box to be buried in the gardens at Glencairn. But the paper did not state what the box contained.

The Colonel was intrigued. He wanted to know more about the young woman. He continued

searching the attic until he discovered some other records about the girl. Her name was Roselyn, and she had taken ill at Glencairn. When her illness had become worse, she was sent to Italy to recover. Instead, she became even sicker there and pleaded to return to Glencairn. Before her journey could be arranged, Roselyn died and was buried in Rome. Her dying wish, however, was for something dear to her to be placed in the box and buried at Glencairn. The records did not indicate what that object was.

"Why hasn't this box been buried in the gardens?" Colonel Bushe asked himself. He then wrote Mr. Simon and asked him to visit again as soon as possible to help put the ghost to rest.

When Mr. Simon arrived a few days later, the Colonel told the servants that the two men were not to be disturbed. Then they locked themselves in the drawing room and placed the small box on the table in front of them.

"This holds the answer to my ghost," the Colonel said. Before he buried it, he wanted to know what was inside.

Since there was no key, the Colonel took a poker from the fireplace and pried off the lock. His hands were shaking as he lifted the lid.

"But it's just a scrap of cloth," Mr. Simon said. Inside was a piece of yellow fabric.

The Colonel lifted a corner of the cloth and peered under it. There was a dried white rose and under it—a well-preserved human heart, taken from Roselyn's body upon her death.

Without a word, the Colonel closed the box. He and Mr. Simon took it to a secret corner of the

garden and buried it. At last, Roselyn's dying wish was granted. Her ghost was never seen again, and Colonel Bushe's ghost-hunting days were over.



2

Mrs. Goodeve: The Three Ghosts at Midnight

How would you like to spend the night alone, in total darkness, and in a cold, damp church waiting for three ghosts to meet you? That's exactly what happened to a brave ghost detective named Mrs. Goodeve about 100 years ago in the small English town of Snettisham. Her experience provides one of the strangest and most remarkable cases of haunting ever recorded, for it involved three visits by up to three ghosts at two locations over 200 miles apart!

She first met the ghosts when she and her children were visiting the Ackland family near Bristol, England. Apparently, the Acklands lived in a house haunted by the ghost of a former resident, a Mrs. Seagrim. They had heard strange noises, and one member of the family had been sprinkled with water once in the attic, as if some-

one had shaken a wet paintbrush at her. Despite these events, no one had actually seen Mrs. Seagrim's ghost. In fact, nothing unusual had happened in the house at all in over two years, until Mrs. Goodeve came to visit in October 1893.

The First Visit: Tomorrow!

Because the Acklands' house was small, Mrs. Goodeve slept in the same bedroom as her two daughters. During their first night, Mrs. Goodeve was awakened by footsteps in the hallway three different times. By the third time, she wondered if something was wrong, so she lit her candle and walked quietly to the door so as not to disturb her daughters.

Finding no one in the hall, she returned to bed and read for awhile. She dozed off, with the candle still burning, and awoke a little later to find that the candle had burned low and was flickering out.

In the dim light Mrs. Goodeve saw a woman standing near her bed. She had light brown hair and was wearing a soft, white shawl draped over her head and around her shoulders.

The woman looked at Mrs. Goodeve and said, "Follow me." Without wondering what was happening, Mrs. Goodeve got out of bed, took the sputtering candle, and followed the woman out of the room across the hall into the upstairs drawing room. The woman walked to the end of the room.

She turned and said, "Tomorrow."

Then she disappeared.

At first, Mrs. Goodeve figured that she must have been sleepwalking and dreaming at the same time. She thought of Mrs. Seagrim. Could she have seen Mrs. Seagrim's ghost, she wondered? Mrs. Goodeve's suspicion was reinforced when she returned to her room and found one of her daughters awake.

"Who was that lady?" the sleepy daughter asked.

Mrs. Goodeve was surprised. "It was just me," she replied, careful not to frighten her. "Now go to sleep."

The next morning, when Mrs. Goodeve told Mr. Ackland what had happened, he refused to believe her.

"But the drawing room is locked at night," he told her. "You can't have gone in there."

"I tell you that we walked into the drawing room," she said.

Mr. Ackland summoned the maid and asked if she had forgotten to lock the drawing-room door the night before.

"Oh, no, sir," she said. "I remember locking it. And it's still locked now, for I haven't unlocked it yet this morning."

"But I have a candle that I took from the drawing room," Mrs. Goodeve told Mr. Ackland. "I know that I was there last night."

With the maid, they checked the room. Mrs. Goodeve showed them where the candle had been.

"I put fresh candles here last night as I always do," the maid said. "I know I put one on this stand."

Convinced that Mrs. Goodeve might have had an encounter with Mrs. Seagrim, Mr. Ackland arranged for her to meet Mrs. Seagrim's physician, Dr. Marshall, who might be able to confirm that she had seen Mrs. Seagrim's ghost. When Dr. Marshall heard Mrs. Goodeve's description of the brown-haired woman, he agreed that she must have seen Mrs. Seagrim's ghost.

Even though Mrs. Goodeve hadn't been frightened by the ghost, the thought of seeing her again that night troubled her. Mr. Ackland had an idea, however. He rigged up an electric bell, which he placed under her pillow. If she saw the ghost again, she was to ring the bell and Mr. Ackland would come to help her.

The Second Visit: Go to Snettisham!

That night, Mrs. Goodeve had her daughters sleep in another room while she tried to stay awake reading a book. Sometime after midnight, though, she fell asleep despite her precautions. When she awoke, she saw Mrs. Seagrim. This time, the ghost seemed very agitated.

She leaned over the bed and said, "I have come back. Listen! I need your help."

"I must be dreaming," Mrs. Goodeve found herself saying.

"If you doubt me," Mrs. Seagrim continued, "you will find that the date of my marriage was September 26, 1860."

Immediately, another ghost appeared to her

right. This ghost—a tall, handsome man—was about sixty years old and dressed in ordinary clothes.

"I am Henry Barnard," he said. "I am buried in Snettisham churchyard." Then he gave the dates of his marriage and death. Mrs. Goodeve made a mental note of the dates, even though she had never heard of Henry Barnard or Snettisham.

"You are to go to Snettisham," the ghost of Henry Barnard said, "and verify these dates in the church register. If you find that the dates are correct, then that same night at one-fifteen you are to enter the Snettisham church, where you will find the grave of Robert Cobb. We will contact you there."

Henry Barnard then gave Mrs. Goodeve specific instructions: she was to take the train to Snettisham, a town northeast of Cambridge and over 200 miles away.

"When you get to Snettisham," he continued, "you will receive help from a man named John Bishop. And you will stay in the house of a woman whose child drowned and was buried in the Snettisham churchyard.

"When you have done all this," he concluded, "you will hear the rest of our story."

As he finished talking, another ghost appeared behind Mrs. Seagrim. This man—whose name was never revealed by Mrs. Goodeve—looked very troubled. He covered his face with his hands and seemed to be in great distress. Slowly, the three ghosts faded from sight.

Only then did Mrs. Goodeve think to press the

bell. When Mr. Ackland rushed in a few moments later, he found her passed out on the floor beside her bed.

Verifying the Facts:

Preparing for the Third Visit

For the next few days, Mrs. Goodeve faithfully recorded the details of the haunting in her diary, including all of the dates that the ghosts had mentioned. She verified with Mrs. Seagrim's daughter the date of her mother's marriage; it matched the date given by Mrs. Seagrim's ghost. Mrs. Goodeve didn't doubt at all that she had seen three ghosts, and that one of them was Mrs. Seagrim. What she couldn't explain was why they had appeared to her. What help could she possibly give them—especially at 1:15 A.M. in the Snettisham church? Despite any worries that she had, she decided to travel to Snettisham to see if the dates that Henry Barnard had given her were correct.

On the morning of Saturday, October 14th, she began her journey to Snettisham. When she arrived that evening, she found that a village fair was in progress and that no empty rooms were available. When she finally located a room for the night, it was in the home of John Bishop. When she told him that she was in Snettisham to confirm some marriage and death dates in the church register, he told her that he was the church clerk and could arrange for her to see the register. What's more, the next morning, Mrs.

Bishop mentioned that her child had drowned and was buried in the churchyard. Almost everything Henry Barnard's ghost had told her had come true. Mrs. Goodeve was convinced that the dates Barnard had given her would be found in the church register.

Shortly after breakfast, Mrs. Goodeve got her first look at the parish church in Snettisham. On the east edge of town, it is approached by a dirt path lined by Irish yew trees. Mrs. Goodeve looked like the other parishioners on her way to church that morning, except that she had a supernatural mission to accomplish.

After the service, she examined the register with John Bishop. The dates Barnard had given her were confirmed in the register. She also discovered that John Bishop had known Henry Barnard. When she described the ghost, John Bishop said it sounded like she had seen Henry Barnard. Mrs. Goodeve asked Bishop to take her to Barnard's grave. He led her through the overgrown graveyard that surrounded the church to a small railed area that contained Barnard's grave. Growing wildly over the railing were flowering white rose bushes.

In the afternoon, Mrs. Goodeve walked with Mrs. Bishop through the town and into the countryside. Eventually, they passed Cobb Hall, the house that had been owned by Henry Barnard and now belonged to his daughter. Mrs. Goodeve considered calling on her, but thought better about it. After all, she didn't want to tell the daughter that she planned to meet her father's ghost—and two others—that night.

The Third Visit:

Three Ghosts at 1:15 A.M.

Mrs. Goodeve attended the evening church service and prayed for strength. Afterward, she waited outside until all of the lights were extinguished, wondering if she would have the nerve to go back later that night.

At 1:00 A.M., she and John Bishop opened the rear door of the church and entered the minister's chambers. Together, they searched the church's interior but discovered no sign of anyone else. Then Mrs. Goodeve located Robert Cobb's grave inside the church: in the southwest corner near the oven where Communion bread was baked. She took a seat in a nearby pew and asked Bishop to go. He did so, leaving Mrs. Goodeve in complete darkness.

What happened next isn't completely known, since Mrs. Goodeve was reluctant to give all of the details. According to her, the three ghosts appeared and asked her help in sorting out a legal problem. When Henry Barnard had purchased Cobb Hall from Robert Cobb, something illegal had been done. Mrs. Goodeve was given instructions to correct the wrong. She was asked also to pick a white rose from Barnard's grave and deliver it personally to his daughter at Cobb Hall.

At 1:45 A.M., John Bishop knocked at the church door and asked Mrs. Goodeve if she was ready to leave.

"Yes," she told him. "My business is almost finished."

Early the next morning, she walked to Cobb Hall and handed Barnard's daughter the white rose.

"You look very much like your father," Mrs. Goodeve told her. They talked awhile, and Mrs. Goodeve passed on other messages that Barnard had given her.

Mrs. Goodeve was never visited by the three ghosts again. Nor was the Ackland house ever haunted by Mrs. Seagrim. Mrs. Goodeve's work as a ghost hunter ended abruptly, leaving a number of mysteries unsolved.

Why did the three ghosts appear together? Did Henry Barnard know Mrs. Seagrim? And who was the third ghost? How was he related to the Cobbs and the Barnards? Was each of the ghosts so troubled by the illegal real estate deal that they united after death and decided to correct it?

Perhaps the most important question of all is: why was Mrs. Goodeve selected for their visit? Others had lived in and visited Mrs. Seagrim's house. Why didn't the ghosts appear to them, or the Acklands, or even Henry Barnard's daughter? Something about Mrs. Goodeve's personality must have made her a likely accomplice for the ghosts.

Despite many attempts to unravel them, the mysteries remain, making this one of the most intriguing unsolved hauntings ever.

Part II

GHOST HUNTERS:

Researchers

The largest category of ghost hunters consists of researchers. Research, though, is a complicated process and involves performing many steps. Most ghost hunters who are researchers concentrate on one or two of the required steps. For example, some are writers, who publish collections of the best ghost stories they find. Others are interviewers who, once they hear of a haunting, investigate it by recording what the witnesses observed or experienced. They then publish a book or article with information about the hauntings. Others not only conduct interviews but investigate the site of the haunting, looking for actual evidence of a ghost.

In this section, you'll read about the experiences of seven researchers.



BEGEL

3

Mary Wilkins: The Mummy's Eyes

One of the most dedicated ghost hunters in Ireland was Mary Wilkins, who lived in Dublin around 1900. Although not much is known about her personal life, she was a respected member of the English, Irish, and American Societies for Psychical Research. In September 1913, she published an article, "Personal Experiences," in which she described eleven cases of ghostly occurrences that had been reported to her from 1905 to 1913 by her friends and relatives.

One of the best of these is "Case IV," which concerns a family identified only as Family L. Family L is of special interest because spirits of the dead attempted to contact Mrs. L or her middle daughter, Rachel, in three related incidents.

The first encounter took place shortly after the

family rented a newly built house along the southern coast of Ireland. One afternoon, soon after the family had moved in, Mrs. L was standing in the kitchen when she heard and felt an explosion. She discovered nothing, however, that could explain the blast. A few days later, she learned that the wife of her favorite uncle had died at the exact time of the mysterious explosion. Was the explosion a message from a ghost of the dying? Or was it merely an odd coincidence? Mrs. L wasn't interested in finding out.

Not long afterwards, the whole family began to hear knocking sounds at different times during the day: rapping on the doors, the windows, the walls. As Mary Wilkins reported, sometimes the raps were "like a sledgehammer, loud and dying away, and sometimes quick and sharp, two or three or five in succession." Although everyone in the family, including the maid, heard the noise, the knocking seemed to occur only when Mrs. L was in the house.

One night, around four o'clock, Mrs. L was disturbed by a loud knock on her bedroom door. At first, she thought it must be the maid, so she said, "Come in." The knocking continued so loudly and persistently that her husband also woke up.

"See what it is," Mrs. L told him.

He got up from bed and went quietly to the door. He jerked the door open, but the hallway was empty. Then he searched the entire house from attic to basement, but found nothing.

Later that morning, a telegram arrived announcing the death of Mrs. L's favorite uncle. He had died around the time of the mysterious knocking. Mrs. L began to wonder what was happening to her. Was the knocking another coincidence? Or could her dying uncle have been trying to communicate news of his death to the family? And what about the explosion she had heard? Maybe it hadn't been her imagination after all . . .

Deeply disturbed by these events, Mrs. L became ill. To help her feel better, the family moved from the house even though their lease had not expired. In their new house, Mrs. L regained her health, and a few years passed without any ghostly incidents. During that time a young male friend named Richard had come from England to live with the family and help with the chores.

Rachel, the middle daughter, slept in a bed near a window. One night she happened to wake up and glance at the window. There she saw a person's face peering in at her. *Am I dreaming?* she asked herself. She blinked her eyes a few times and decided that she must be awake. Then she took a closer look at the face and realized that it was so muffled in cloth, except for the eyes, that it resembled a mummy. Then the figure disappeared, and Rachel went back to sleep.

The next morning Rachel told her family about her strange experience. She didn't argue when everyone said that she'd had a dream. A few nights later, she awoke to see the same face, still

draped in cloth. The mummy's face was pressed against the window pane and seemed more menacing. Before she could scream, the face disappeared. In the morning, no one believed her again.

Finally, another night soon after, she relived the same experience. This time, the mummy's face seemed to move through the glass toward the bed . . . toward her. She closed her eyes, but felt the mummy's presence as it bent over her body. Then, she opened her eyes. Inches away from her was the mummy's face, its eyes staring at hers. She screamed, and the mummy disappeared.

The next morning, a telegram arrived for Richard. It said that his mother, who lived in England, had had an unfortunate accident the night before and had died; he left immediately for the funeral.

After her mother's experiences with the explosion and knocking, Rachel knew that the mummy's face and the telegram were somehow related. She also sensed that the face would never bother her again.

Family L contacted Ghost Hunter Wilkins and related their strange experiences, hoping she could explain them. After interviewing every member of the family, Mary Wilkins investigated why Rachel had seen a face wrapped in cloth. She learned that Richard's mother had died from injuries received in a fire while she slept. Her face was so badly burned that it had been wrapped in cloth. Only her eyes had remained uncovered.

Mr. L told Wilkins on March 11, 1913, "I cannot understand or explain our strange experiences." A wise ghost hunter, Mary Wilkins let her readers supply their own explanations.



BIEBEL

4

Peter Moss: The Bleeding House

Imagine yourself traveling down a dirt road that winds through a dark forest. At every turn, the road seems to narrow more until it becomes nothing more than a path that seems to lead nowhere. Finally, enveloped by the eerie silence of the forest, you round one more bend and see before you an old manor house. You walk toward it, relieved that you've come upon a sign of civilization yet worried that you may find something unsettling inside. For you realize immediately that this is the perfect setting for a haunted house.

Such a manor house actually exists in the English countryside near Brighton, according to Ghost Hunter Peter Moss. Even though the house is well over 900 years old, his research uncovered a ghost which has haunted the house only since 1961. The most recent owners of the house told Moss about the ghost on the condition that he would not reveal their identity or the exact location of the house. This is their story.

In 1961, Mr. and Mrs. Forster and their four children lived in the house. One morning, as the children were eating breakfast with their mother, they heard piano music coming from the room directly overhead. Mrs. Forster was puzzled, since they didn't own a piano.

Her youngest son, Frank, wasn't surprised.

"I've heard that music before," he said. In fact, he had heard it on many other occasions.

The children raced upstairs to search the room but uncovered nothing. A few months later, they heard the music once more, but never again after that. The ghost, however, was just warming up for a full-blown haunting. As it began to reveal its identity, other more mysterious and frightening happenings occurred.

One day in 1963, Mrs. Forster was ironing a white cotton blouse in the kitchen when a drop of red liquid dribbled onto the blouse. So convinced was she that the liquid was blood, she immediately checked to see if her nose was bleeding; it was not. Not stopping to wonder where the blood had come from, Mrs. Forester tried to remove the stain by running it under cold water. But the spot wouldn't wash out, even after she'd rubbed in a little soap. Angry that the blouse was ruined, she returned to the ironing board and found that another drop of blood had soaked through the cloth cover. This time, she looked up at the ceiling: the white plaster was perfectly clean. What's more, there were no cracks or joints overhead through which anything could have leaked.

Like the piano music, the blood could not be

explained, and life settled down. It wasn't until 1971 that the next major episode occurred.

A friend of the family was spending the night at the Forsters' manor house, when she woke up from a deep sleep, aware that her scalp felt prickly. As she became more alert, she realized that the room felt stifling hot, almost as if it were on fire. Then she saw what looked like two arms floating on the far side of the dark room. At first, she questioned her eyesight, but as the arms began to move toward the bed—the hands open, the fingers extended—as if ready to grab her, the Forsters' friend decided that she would have to save herself.

A devoutly religious woman, she began to recite the Lord's Prayer.

"Our Father, who art in Heaven . . ." Later she told the Forsters that she couldn't remember if she said the prayer out loud or to herself.

But the white arms, the white hands, the white fingers kept floating toward her.

"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done . . ."

The arms had reached the posts at the foot of her bed, the fingers were aiming straight for her.

She reached the last part of the prayer and said:

"Deliver us from Evil."

At that moment, the hands vanished, but the friend was so shaken that she refused to spend another night in the house and stayed in a nearby hotel instead.

The Forsters were puzzled. They didn't doubt their friend's experience. After all, she was an experienced nurse and hardly the kind of person prone

to hallucinations. But they wondered why the ghost, if indeed it was one, never appeared to them.

Finally, one autumn evening in 1973, Mrs. Forster saw the ghost for herself. That night, with her husband away on business, she had supper with the children and went to bed early. She had no sooner picked up a book from the bedside table, when she heard the latch on the bedroom door click and the hinges creak. She assumed that one of her children wanted to see her and glanced up. She was stunned to see that a strange old woman had entered the bedroom instead. Before she had time to think, the old woman closed the door behind her and leaned against it, staring at Mrs. Forster.

During those few silent moments, Mrs. Forster got a good look at the woman. Her gray hair was pinned into a tight bun, and she wore a long drab-colored dress with a large ruffle of lace at the neck.

Then the woman clasped her hands in front of her, almost as if she were praying, and began to walk toward Mrs. Forster. At this point, she hadn't yet realized that she was seeing a ghost. She thought—or was trying to make herself believe—that the woman was a stranger who had become lost and had entered the house looking for shelter. She was so surprised by the woman that she couldn't speak. But as the woman approached the bed, Mrs. Forster finally asked:

"Who are you? What do you want?"

At the sound of the voice, the woman disappeared. It was only then that Mrs. Forster realized that she had seen the ghost of the manor.

Sometime later, the Forsters told some friends

who lived in a nearby town about the apparition. Without hesitation, the friends reported that the woman resembled Miss Thynne, the previous owner of the house, who had died in a fire in 1958, just a few years before the Forsters had purchased it. They also learned that Miss Thynne had slept in the same bedroom now used by the Forsters, which accounted for her appearance there.

Finally, in 1976, Mrs. Forster had her last encounter with Miss Thynne. One day in September, Mrs. Forster walked into the kitchen and saw a small spill on the kitchen table. She thought it was odd that she had missed a pool of liquid on the table; after all, she had cleaned up after breakfast. As she peered at the liquid, she realized that it was blood.

Unfortunately, the Forsters never determined where it came from. No one had been in the kitchen, and, as before, no leaks were found.

A curious person might have called a ghost hunter to investigate the mysterious occurrences. Instead, the Forsters sold the house to the present owners, and the record of the haunting stops there with many more questions than answers: Was the red liquid really blood? If so, why did it appear in the kitchen? Was Miss Thynne responsible for it—as well as the piano music and the arms that menaced the Forsters' overnight guest?

When the current owners bought the house, the haunting apparently stopped. But they learned enough about the house to know that someone like Peter Moss should be contacted so that the story would be recorded. Just in case Miss Thynne should ever appear again.



5

G. W. Lambert: The Pleading Ghost of Vicarage Farm

Although he worked as assistant undersecretary of state for war in England, G. W. Lambert was devoted to the study of the paranormal. At one point, he was the president of the British Society for Psychical Research, which offered him the opportunity to investigate many hauntings.

One of his strangest cases was the ghost of Johnnie Minney, a boy who once lived in the town of Waresley, England, in the house at Vicarage Farm. Over 500 years old, the house had been divided into two apartments in 1965. Shirley Ross had just moved into one of the apartments, when a friend named Stella Herbert came to visit her on July 7, 1965.

As she was bringing her luggage from the taxi, Mrs. Herbert briefly met Margaret Minney, who lived in the other half of the house. By the time

evening came, Mrs. Herbert was exhausted from her journey and went to bed early, falling quickly asleep. Sometime later, she awoke to find a young boy dressed in white pajamas, kneeling beside her bed. He stared at her with the saddest eyes she had ever seen. His face was so thin and drawn she was sure that, if he tried to stand up, he would surely keel right over.

The boy's silent expression pleaded with Mrs. Herbert. She sat up in bed and studied his face more carefully. As she did, she heard a voice inside her head. She seemed to think that the boy, though he hadn't said a word, was asking her to call his mother in the next room. She kept hearing the word "mummy" echo in her mind.

Mrs. Herbert knew that the boy wasn't one of the Ross children. They were all grown and living in Australia. As she wondered who he was and what to do about him, his look became so insistent that she finally said outloud: "Mummy."

Immediately his hands began to claw at her arm.

"Please," his face said. "Please I need your help. Please."

His pleading look upset her so much that her eyes filled with tears.

"Mummy," she said again.

He reached toward her and placed his hands on her shoulders, as if he were begging her to call his mother again.

"Mummy!" she called in a loud, clear voice.

At that moment, he disappeared.

Mrs. Herbert was so overcome with fatigue that she fell asleep and didn't awake until Mrs. Ross

knocked on her door the next morning. She told Mrs. Ross about her encounter with the boy.

"I never heard a sound," Mrs. Ross said.

"I'm not sure how loudly I was speaking," Mrs. Herbert explained. "I'm sure I thought I was screaming. He was so desperate. The look in his eyes was so pitiful. And when he clawed my arm, the sensation was so vivid that I can still feel it now." She rubbed her forearm.

"I'm sure I would have been quite scared," Mrs. Ross said.

"That's the odd part," Mrs. Herbert replied. "I wasn't frightened at all. I just felt so badly for the boy."

That day, Mrs. Ross tried to cheer her friend up. They went to church and later shopped in town. Even a car ride through the English countryside failed to diminish the impression left by the little boy. As evening fell, Mrs. Herbert was so upset about the unexplained visit that Mrs. Ross questioned Margaret Minney, who had lived at Vicarage Farm her entire life.

"Did a little boy ever die in the house?" she asked.

"Yes, my brother Johnnie," Margaret Minney said.

"Then come next door with me and listen to my friend. She has had an experience you'll want to hear."

Mrs. Herbert's story upset Margaret Minney so much that she cried.

"You saw Johnnie—my brother—who died when he was five," she said.

Forty-four years earlier, in 1921, Johnnie Minney became ill. At that time, the house had not

been divided, and Johnnie's bedroom was the one now used by Mrs. Herbert.

"He had meningitis," Margaret Minney said, "and he became terribly thin. The way you describe him is how he looked before he died. It was such an awful time for all of us. Sometimes he had spells when he seemed quite normal; then there were times when he'd shout with pain and cry and call for Mummy, as if he couldn't bear it."

During the last few months of his life, he lay in his mother's bedroom—the one now used by Mrs. Ross. During that hot summer, his mother and sister took turns placing ice on his forehead in a futile attempt to reduce his temperature. Finally, on August 21st, he died, an emaciated boy of five.

"I can't believe that you saw him," Margaret Minney said to Mrs. Herbert.

"Oh yes, he was definitely there," Mrs. Herbert said. "It was no dream."

"I'm overjoyed," was all that Margaret could say.

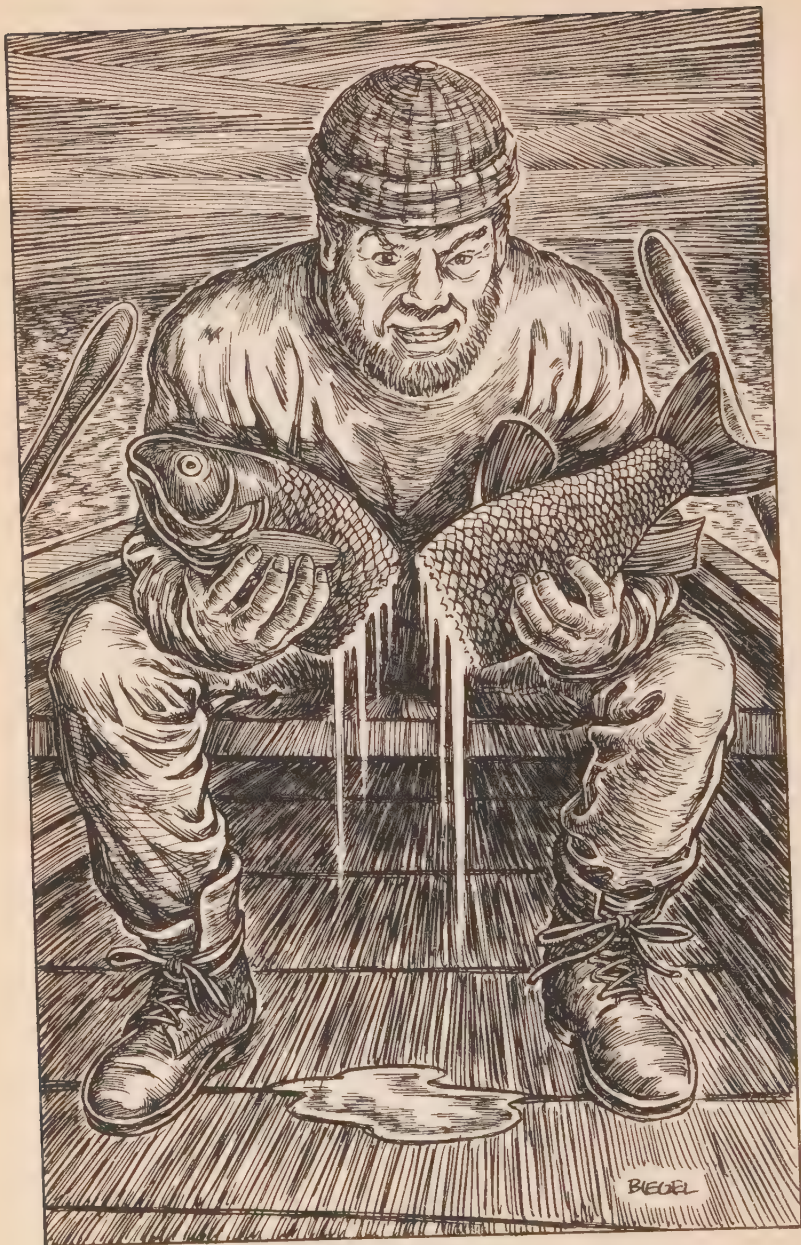
That night, and for the rest of her stay at Vicarage Farm, Mrs. Herbert's sleep was undisturbed. The ghost of Johnnie Minney was never seen again. But, Mrs. Ross wondered, why did Mrs. Herbert see Johnnie Minney to begin with? A few days after the episode, she wrote to the British Society for Psychical Research. Her letter was answered by G. W. Lambert who asked the women to write a complete account of their experience. He also ordered a copy of Johnnie's death certificate to verify the date and cause of his death. When he had this evidence, he wrote a report about the ghost that was published in an issue of the Society's journal.

His report attempted to answer a number of questions related to the haunting.

Had Mrs. Herbert heard of Johnnie Minney before she came to Vicarage Farm? Because he had died forty-four years earlier and because Mrs. Herbert hadn't been to England since the age of two, this seemed unlikely. After all, there was no reason to remember Johnnie's death—especially if no one had ever seen his ghost. Mrs. Herbert had said nothing more than hello to Margaret Minney when she arrived at the farm. Even the one photograph of Johnnie that Margaret had was tucked away in a drawer with the rest of her family photos. Chances are good, then, that Stella Herbert had no prior information about Johnnie's sad death.

Why did this experience happen to Stella Herbert? After all, Johnnie died in Shirley Ross's bedroom. Why didn't he appear to her? It may be that Stella Herbert was more sensitive to his presence than other people. Perhaps Johnnie had been waiting for the right person to visit Vicarage Farm. Mrs. Herbert told Lambert that she had had another experience with a ghost once, but she refused to give him any of the details.

Stella Herbert seems to provide the key to the ghost's appearance. Poor Johnnie Minney, in such desperate pain and without any hope. The memory of his pain lasted over forty years—until a woman with a gift that most people don't have tuned in and tried to help stop his suffering.



6

Colin Parsons: Five Days Out from San Francisco

Starting in the 1960s, Colin Parsons began collecting newspaper stories and other tips about encounters with ghosts. He went on to contact people who experienced or witnessed unusual occurrences. He interviewed them and, when possible, tried to confirm their story.

One of his investigations concerned Eric and Peter, two young men who became sailors in the 1950s. They wanted to see the world before they settled down so they worked on various ships. They sailed to exotic places like Port Said and Bangkok, but the experience they remember most was the time that they found themselves in San Francisco, broke and without jobs. Fortunately, they came across the captain of a tramp steamer who needed two sailors to complete his crew. The ship was bound for the Philippines car-

rying a secret cargo said to be legal but dangerous. Eric and Peter were unconcerned; after all, they had always wanted to see the Philippines.

Five days out from San Francisco, they were awakened in the middle of the night.

"All hands! All hands on deck!"

They rushed to the deck only to find the ship ablaze. There weren't enough crew members to fight the fire. They were told to put on life jackets and jump into the sea. Frightened and confused, Eric and Peter did just what they were told. When they hit the water, they began to swim as far from the ship as possible, until they heard the ship explode. Then the sea was silent. The ship was gone. There were no signs of any other survivors. Eric and Peter were sure that they would die.

At dawn, they found themselves in the middle of a cold and gray ocean. They were thirsty and hungry and felt they had no chance of surviving. They were so exhausted, they couldn't even swim. They simply floated along, expecting to lose consciousness at any moment.

Peter thought he heard a splash. He was sure he was hallucinating. He heard another splash, followed quickly by another. Oars were striking the water nearby. Someone was rowing a boat towards them. He pulled each of them aboard a small boat. Eric and Peter looked at their rescuer.

A large man, he wore a navy blue sweater and spoke in a Scottish accent.

"My name's Ross," he told them. He explained that his own vessel had sunk and he had been rowing ever since.

"Do you have anything to eat or drink?" Eric asked. His mouth was parched, and he was weak from hunger and exhaustion.

Ross shook his head, then added, "But there are other ways."

Then he leaned over the side of the boat, reached into the ocean, and grabbed a fish with his bare hands. He seemed dissatisfied with its small size, so he threw it back. Then he caught one fish after another, tossing each back into the ocean, until at last he found one that was an acceptable size. He tore the wiggling fish in half, and handed it to Eric and Peter.

"Suck the water from it," he advised them. "Then chew the flesh."

To pass the time, they asked Ross about his ship, but he became confused and embarrassed about their questions. Later that day, they overheard Ross mutter to himself, "I was a fool, they should never have died" and "Millie shall have it." He repeated each statement over and over again.

That night, they found a small deserted island. It was mostly a large collection of rocks set in the middle of the sea. It held almost no vegetation and no signs of life. However, they found rain water which had collected on some of the rocks, and Ross was able to catch more fish.

The next morning, Ross woke them, saying that he had to leave.

"Would you do a favor for me, boys?" he asked.

Eric and Peter agreed. Then Ross recited his wife's address and a safe-deposit box number.

"The key to the box will be found in the shed

behind my house," he told them and gave them precise directions to the spot. "My wife is to have everything in the box."

He began to push off the boat.

"Don't you worry," Ross told them. "You'll be picked up within two days. You're safer here than in my boat."

Then he rowed away.

Later that day, a United States Coast Guard plane buzzed the island and dropped a package of supplies, along with a brief message: *SHIP ON WAY*. By the next morning, a ship had rescued the two and taken them to San Francisco, where they were asked to explain how they had come to be on the island.

"Where's Ross?" they asked, once they had described the explosion of their ship and their rescue by the Scottish sailor.

"All we know is that some guy hailed a coaster and told them to radio us with your position. As far as I know, he just rowed off again. It's our job to rescue people in trouble, not question people on the high seas."

Eric and Peter were puzzled, but followed through on their promise to Ross. When they returned to Great Britain, they located Mrs. Millicent Ross. When they told Mrs. Ross that a key was hidden in her back shed, she was amused, but allowed them to look. Sure enough, they turned up the key to the safe-deposit box.

Eric wrote the box number on a slip of paper. "Your husband said that the key will fit this box at your bank."

Mrs. Ross became noticeably upset.

"How did you know about this?" she asked.

They told her how they had met her husband.

"But he's been dead for eight years." She told the two men that her husband had fallen overboard while on a cargo ship in the Pacific.

Eric and Peter were so shaken that they could not forget their encounter. Eventually, a reporter heard of their spooky rescue and wrote a newspaper article about it.

That's where Colin Parsons read it. The story intrigued him so much that he decided to check for proof. He found it in the captain's log of the cargo ship from which Ross had fallen. It read (as translated by Parsons):

At 3 P.M., the wind which had blown strongly all day freshened to almost storm force. All hands were ordered on deck as a precaution and AD Ross was reported as drunk. A small fight broke out between the officer of the watch and Ross when he tried to launch one of the ship's boats, apparently under the impression that a hurricane was imminent. The officer was incapacitated by Ross and I ordered two seamen to restrain him. The boat and the three men fell into the sea and the ship stopped. All three were brought back dead and in accordance with my duties they were given burial at sea.

More chilling than this entry, though, is the one that followed a few days later: the boat that fell into the water was never recovered.

It must be the boat that Ross still rows in the Pacific, five days out from San Francisco.

BIEBEL



7

Philip Paul: The Haunting of Abbas Hall

Many people are interested in ghosts, but few are ghost hunters. What makes a person pursue this hobby? There are no simple answers to this question. First, most ghost hunters must have skills in reading, thinking, and writing. They must want to read about the paranormal. They must know how to research a subject, develop questions and investigate them thoroughly. They must also be able to report their experiences and write about them convincingly. Second, many ghost hunters at a young age experience the death of a relative. An early encounter with death can easily cause a child to think about ghosts and hauntings. Finally, all ghost hunters share a common trait. They must be fascinated by the inexplicable and compelled to understand it.

Childhood Experiences:

The Death of His Sister

Philip Paul first became interested in ghosts on a Saturday night in February 1938. At 10:45 P.M., his sister Doris said she was going to take a bath; that was the last time the family saw her alive. Later that night, Paul's older brother discovered that Doris had died in the bathtub. An autopsy revealed that the cause of death was an undiagnosed bleeding ulcer.

The next morning, three sisters, who were Doris's closest friends, stopped by to visit her. Shocked by the news of her death, they revealed an unsettling experience that had occurred the night before.

The two older sisters had gone to a dance, leaving the youngest sister, Violet, at home to spend a quiet evening reading. As Paul explained it:

Suddenly in the silence she heard three distinct raps on the window. Startled . . . , she went to the window and looked outside. Seeing nothing unusual, she opened it and peered outside. There was no tree, no wind, no bird and no sign of anyone. Closing and refastening the window, she returned to her book. At once the three knocks were repeated. Now frightened, she snatched up her handbag and some other valuables, dashed into the bedroom and locked the door.

When her sisters returned, Violet told them about the knocks which had occurred at about 11:00 P.M.

The sisters learned that Doris had died be-

tween 10:45 and midnight. Could Doris's ghost have been signaling for help? If so, why would she choose a friend—even a close friend—who lived a few miles away when her own family was present in the house?

This was Philip Paul's personal and tragic introduction to the subject of ghosts and hauntings.

The Ghost Stories of Rayner Alexander

Philip Paul's second experience with ghosts was arranged by his grandfather, Rayner Alexander, who enjoyed telling ghost stories. One night, according to Rayner's story, a poacher, who was being chased by a game warden, took cover in the bushes near the pond. He stayed there for almost an hour, hoping that his pursuer would leave. Suddenly, he heard a cart and pony approach the pond. Two men got out of the cart and carried a large bundle to the edge of the pond. Then they heaved it into the water where it sank with a gurgle.

Because he was a poacher, the man could not say publicly what he had seen. Despite his best efforts, he was unable to find what had been thrown into the water.

A year passed, and one night a couple strolled past the pond on their way home. They became aware of a sudden chill and a terrible odor. The man thought at first that an animal had died by the pond and went to look. He climbed a small embankment and looked down on the pond. With

the help of a full moon, he noticed a ripple in the water. From the center of the ripple, a human hand appeared, its fingers grasping at the air, as if it were trying to pull itself from the water.

The man gasped, and his wife joined him. She too witnessed the hand before it sank beneath the water. They told anyone who would listen the details of their horrible encounter. When the game poacher heard, he was so terrified that he too added his account.

"Many have tried to find the bundle the men tossed into the pond, but none have succeeded. Many also tried to discover who the two men were, but failed. Still, the dreadful hand has been seen each year at the same time, groping from its watery tomb," Paul's grandfather concluded.

"When was that?" Paul asked.

"It happened so long ago that I can't be exactly sure," Rayner said. "But it was around harvest time."

Paul became terrified of the pond, especially during the harvest season. But as he grew older, he learned a good lesson from the frightening ghost story: most fears are caused by ourselves. His grandfather's story was simply an old ghost tale, nothing to take seriously and nothing, certainly, to be frightened of. Paul discovered that when he went to visit the pond some nights. "All I smelled were the night scents of the countryside; all I heard were the scurryings of nocturnal creatures; all I fancied I saw, by the moon's reflection in the pool, was my grandfather's knowing old visage, winking."

An Unusual Investigation

These two experiences laid the foundation for Paul's work as a ghost hunter. One investigation that he has described was the haunting of Abbas Hall, built in the 1300s.

Yvonne Spalding, the house's tenant, called Paul. She told him she had heard footsteps and strange dragging noises from the two upstairs bedrooms. Once, a visitor had seen the face of a woman peering into the house. In both cases, searches revealed nothing unusual.

One night, when Yvonne was reading a book in the living room, she heard the latch to the door leading to the kitchen "click." She noticed that her dachshund and Siamese cat both looked at the door as if someone had just entered the room. Then the two pets swiveled their heads in unison as if someone were passing by. Then the latch of a second door clicked. A moment later, Yvonne heard the sound of footsteps in her upstairs bedroom. Frightened, she grabbed her pets and drove to a friend's house to spend the night.

Paul decided to investigate, using a somewhat unusual procedure: a seance—a meeting in which people attempt to receive messages from the dead. He chose Yvonne's bedroom as the location for the seance since it was the easiest part of the house to seal. He then proceeded to invite a medium, a person who attempts to contact the dead.

On the evening of the seance, fourteen people, including three newspaper reporters, were pres-

ent in Yvonne Spalding's bedroom. Prior to their arrival, Paul had taped the windows and covered them with heavy blankets. He had also blocked the chimney. Once everyone was seated in a circle in the room, Paul locked the only door and placed his chair against it. Then he took a reading from a thermometer he had brought: 58 degrees Fahrenheit. Finally, he placed a notepad on his lap and blew out the oil lamp beside him.

The room was now completely dark.

John Scammell, the medium, said a few words about the seance, then asked everyone present to join hands. An object at the center of the circle was heaved against the door that Paul guarded. Cold air suddenly filled the room.

Then Scammell began to speak, relating everything he was able to detect about the house and its history. Paul scribbled notes in the darkness:

This building was used by refugees from the Great Plague in London. Then some Dutch people lived there. They had one child, a mentally deficient girl. She died by falling from an upper window of the house. Her father was accused of her murder and put into stocks not far from here. He disposed of her body in the well.

Then Scammell said: "She is coming into this room now through the door and into the center of the circle. She wants to be seen. She has two teeth missing from her upper set."

He asked the girl to knock. Paul heard a few definite taps. Others were certain that they heard "a faint, very faint, slippered pattering on the

floor," as if someone were crossing the room. Later, Scammell insisted that he saw the girl enter the room. No one else saw the ghost appear, and nothing else noteworthy occurred.

At 9:30 P.M., when the seance ended, Paul took another reading from the thermometer. It read 52 degrees. The temperature had dropped 6 degrees. He wondered how to explain such a difference, considering that fourteen people had been sitting in a very small bedroom. He believed that the room temperature should have remained constant or possibly risen.

Everyone left the house that evening, except Paul and his wife, Madge. They wanted to spend the night in case a ghost appeared. The doorbell rang. Two American airmen from a nearby military base had heard about the haunted Abbas Hall and wanted to have a look at it. Paul and his wife invited them to spend the night.

Did they see anything unusual? Did the footsteps recur? At one point, Madge and one of the airmen heard footsteps from the bedroom. Paul and the other airman did not.

By the next day, newspaper accounts of the seance were published. Abbas Hall began to be called "England's most haunted house." Hundreds of sightseers were soon seeking out the house and Paul, reluctantly, had to end his investigation. He asked Yvonne Spalding to inform him of any further developments and marked his report: *To be continued, perhaps.*



8

Peter Underwood: The Haunted Heads of Hexham

Like Philip Paul, Peter Underwood, president of the Ghost Club in England, became interested in the paranormal as a child. When he was nine, his father died quite unexpectedly. On the morning of October 24, 1932, his father had gone to work as usual, and Peter had gone to school. Later that morning, his mother came to get him and told him the news.

That night, Peter slept in his mother's bed. After falling into a sound sleep, he suddenly awoke and saw his father standing at the foot of the bed. Peter sat up, completely stunned by the sight, and nudged his mother.

"Mum . . . it's Dad—he's come back," he told her.

His mother opened her eyes slowly, as if she were dazed. But when she saw her husband's

ghost, she sat up and put her arms out toward him.

The ghost seemed to communicate a message to Peter.

"You didn't think I'd leave you, did you?"

Then, Mrs. Underwood and Peter fell back to sleep. In the morning, Peter questioned his mother about the ghost.

"It was a dream, wasn't it?" he asked.

She was quiet as she thought about his question.

"But you saw him, too, didn't you?" Peter continued.

His mother finally nodded. "Yes, dear, I saw him, but we won't talk about it."

Many times after that, Peter tried to discuss the matter with his mother, but each time she told him, "We won't talk about it, dear."

Perhaps this one incident most influenced his decision to become a ghost hunter. As an adult, Underwood went on to collect true ghost stories and investigate some of them. One eerie account that came to his attention concerned two carved Celtic stones that were uncovered in 1971 in the backyard of a house in Hexham, a small town in northern England. Once he heard the story, he interviewed many of the people involved and filed the following ghost report:

The two stones came to be called "the boy and the girl," since they resembled heads. One, with a face shaped like a skull, was presumed to be male, while the other appeared to have long hair and more feminine features. After they were unearthed, the two heads seemed to cause some strange occurrences in the house of the finders,

Janet and Geoff Masham. The Mashams insisted that the heads had moved by themselves. They also heard strange noises and saw a ghastly black form. One day, a neighbor heard one of the Mashams' children scream; she rushed next door to see what was wrong.

"Something nasty was touching me," the boy said.

As she held the boy, the neighbor saw something "half-human, half-sheeplike" scurry out of the room on all fours. At the same moment, the front door flew open by itself. Needless to say, the Mashams soon got rid of the heads by sending them to a museum in the nearby town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The museum, in turn, shipped them to the home of Dr. Annie Ross, an expert on Celtic stone heads.

Opening the box, she felt suddenly chilled, as if a gust of cold air had been unleashed. She told Underwood that, even though the heads look similar to many others she had studied, she quickly took an intense dislike to these specimens.

The same night, Dr. Ross woke up with a start. Her bedroom had turned quite cold. She was certain that something or someone other than her husband was in the room. She looked toward the open bedroom door where she observed a large black shape, perhaps six feet tall. As Dr. Ross later said, it looked like a cross between a man and a wolf.

She followed the black form as it headed down the hall, halfway down the stairs when it jumped over the banister. It landed with a thud, then turned toward the rear of the house, and disap-

peared. Her husband, who had been awakened as she left the bedroom, had followed close behind—but he had seen nothing. A thorough search of the house revealed nothing unusual. So as not to alarm their children, the Rosses decided not to tell anyone what had happened that night.

For the next four days, nothing unusual happened. Then the Rosses had to travel to London for the day. They left the two younger children under the care of their oldest daughter, Meg, who was fifteen. When they returned from London around six o'clock, they found Meg completely terrified. She had seen some black "thing" on the stairs. In front of her eyes, it had jumped the rail, landed with a thud, and run toward the rear of the house. Even though the parents had never told the daughter of their own encounter, she described the "thing" as half-man and half-wolf.

Eventually everyone in the family, including their cat Jason, saw the mysterious creature as well as experienced some other unsettling events. Doors opened and closed without warning. Pockets of cold air were suddenly detected. Strange sounds were heard. Everything seemed to be related to the stone heads found in Hexham.

Dr. Ross had ten other Celtic heads in her house, as she often did, but these did not have an evil air about them. Dr. Ross encouraged a fellow scientist to take the Hexham heads for study, but once he saw them, he flatly refused. Finally, the museum decided that the heads should be reburied in an undisclosed location. Immediately, strange episodes, similar to the Ross's experience, were reported in the area of the

burial. In fact, the heads were disinterred and reburied three times in all before a suitable spot was found. Wherever they are now buried, no one is saying.

Underwood interviewed Dr. Ross and her husband and recorded their experiences on tape. As he concluded, "it is very difficult not to be impressed by this sombre, careful scientist and her story of strange happenings, a story that is confirmed by other people."



D. Scott Rogo: The Rock-Throwing Poltergeist from Tucson

Some ghost detectives specialize in the investigation of poltergeists, which are invisible, playful ghosts that usually haunt individuals or families rather than houses. Poltergeists are likely to move objects, sometimes breaking them. They may knock on walls, hurl dishes, or move heavy furniture in front of stunned observers. Some ghost hunters say that poltergeists aren't really ghosts. Rather they are strange occurrences caused by a troubled young person and that the young person might be able to produce an energy force so powerful that it can carry out the poltergeist's activities.

D. Scott Rogo was a poltergeist specialist. In one of his last books, *On the Track of the Poltergeist*, he describes a number of cases that he had studied. One of the strangest concerned a rock-throwing poltergeist in Tucson, Arizona.

Rock-throwing poltergeists make themselves known in a different way than normal poltergeists. Rather than surprise a family with wall knocking or furniture moving, they begin by throwing stones. They can pelt a house with individual rocks or cause a shower of stones to cascade from the sky. Sometimes the rocks can even fall *inside* the house. Occasionally, the rock-throwing poltergeist will carry out more normal poltergeist activities, but mostly a family must dodge rocks until the haunting ceases.

The Poltergeist Begins

In September 1983, the Berkbigler family moved into their partially completed house in the desert north of Tucson. Within a few days, though, they were shocked to discover that someone was throwing large, fist-sized rocks at the front of their new house. Some rocks hit the house, others dented their van. They tried to find the culprit, but since their property was covered with bushes and underbrush, providing good hiding places, they were not successful. The sons, twenty-year-old Rick and fifteen-year-old David, searched for the prowler, but everytime they were struck by stones.

The attacks on the house continued, becoming a daily event, usually starting between 5:30 and 7:00 each evening and lasting for two or three hours. In a normal attack, a few rocks would drop onto the roof, as if to give a warning. Then, in short, rapid bursts, four or five rocks would strike the front of the house or the van. The rock throw-

ing might stop for up to fifteen minutes between attacks, then it would continue. If the Berkbiglers were outside when the attack began, they ran indoors. The attacks stopped each evening when the family turned off all the houselights and went to bed.

The thought of a poltergeist never occurred to the family. They had assumed that a vagrant, who was suspected of living in their vacant home before they moved in, was angry at losing his shelter and wanted to scare them away. They called the police, who even used helicopters and stakeouts to find the perpetrator—all to no avail. The police themselves became the target of the rock thrower to the tune of \$600 damage to one patrol car.

Their plight was reported in the local newspaper where it was read by a number of ghost hunters who contacted D. Scott Rogo and asked him to look into the case. Perhaps, they thought, a poltergeist was involved rather than a criminal. Rogo would be the person to find out.

Investigation Phase 1:

Inspection and Observation

Rogo arrived unannounced and uninvited in Tucson on December 6, 1983, three months after the rocks had begun to rain on the Berkbiglers. He immediately drove to the house and saw a number of reporters who were stationed outside awaiting the next incident. Rick Berkbigler took Rogo inside and told him that the family would

accept any help he had to offer; they were desperate to solve the case. Then he filled Rogo in on the most recent events.

The previous Sunday the rock attack had been unending. Some friends and family were visiting, and all were game to find the rock thrower. About 8:30 P.M., as the attacks continued in darkness, Rick led one search team on the south side of the house, while his uncle took a team to the north. They began their search during a momentary lull, but the attack began again soon enough and one rock struck one of Rick's friends in the jaw. As rocks pelted Rick and his group, Rick's uncle believed that he and his party had trapped the culprit behind a bush. Everyone heard rustling behind the bush, but when they shined their flashlights on it, they saw nothing.

Suddenly, they were showered with about eight rocks that seemed to come from the bush itself.

"It was just like the bush was throwing rocks with its branches," Rick said later.

Rick's uncle was knocked unconscious by one rock, when it struck his temple. All of the searchers then threw rocks at the bush, but no one saw the rock thrower leave. The men had helped the injured uncle inside and the rocks began hitting the house again.

Rogo asked to see the bush in question. He wondered if it was possible for a person to throw rocks through it, but he quickly found out that a person would have to stand up and throw rocks *over*, not *through*, the bush. A person would have been spotted—but not a poltergeist.

And a poltergeist is exactly what Rogo sus-

pected. At first, he thought that only rocks had been involved. But as he interviewed the family members he discovered that, during the first week of rock throwing, loud knocks had been heard. The family had also occasionally heard tapping sounds on their windows at night.

That night, as the rock throwing began around dusk, Rogo took the first steps in his investigation: checking the site and observing the poltergeist in action. First, he did some experimenting in the desert darkness. He was surprised at the accuracy with which the rocks hit their victims, especially since someone throwing rocks in almost total darkness wouldn't be able to see the distant target. In fact, Rogo soon realized that an attacker wouldn't be able to see much beyond five or six feet unless he had infrared vision as well as expertise as a rock thrower. Second, as the attack began, Rogo observed as fifteen-year-old David and his father were being struck with stones; in fact, they were hit more often than anyone else. The rock throwing seemed to become worse whenever the two called the rock thrower names.

Rogo asked David to participate in an experiment. Protected by a helmet, David was instructed to go outside and yell names at the rock thrower. Sure enough, within moments, a large rock flew toward David and clattered with great force into the garage. Later, the same experiment was tried again. This time, Rogo and David hid behind the family van. No sooner had David called the attacker a name, than a large rock dropped to the ground right behind him.

Investigation Phase 2:

Interviewing the Haunted Family

When that evening's attack stopped, Rogo went into the second phase of his investigation: exploration of each family member's personality. Whenever a professional ghost hunter investigates a poltergeist case, he or she must conduct personality tests. This is done because cases involving real poltergeists tend to occur in families under a great deal of stress and tension. What's more, poltergeists usually afflict families who have difficulty in expressing their emotions.

Rogo was surprised by the Berkbiglers, though, since they seemed to be a normal, loving family, quite unlike the typical "poltergeist family." However, after he administered the psychological tests to each member, Rogo discovered that David had a tendency to imagine strange smells. This was caused, in all likelihood, by a malfunctioning part of his brain. What Rogo knew, though, is that poltergeist activity had sometimes been related to a person with this medical problem.

Did this mean that David was responsible for the stone throwing? Rogo suspected that he was, and he shared his view with a skeptical Berkbigler family. Still, the next night, Rick ran into the house yelling that he had seen the rock thrower. He had tripped over him as he hid in some bushes. He was wearing black clothing, a cap and gloves, and he took off as soon as he was discovered. Rick had tried to chase him, but ran into a prickly cactus and had to stop.

Everyone except Rogo ran outside to pursue the prowler. Rogo listened to their noisy chase. Then he heard another rock—thrown at the house from the opposite direction—and not, Rogo believed, by the prowler.

“What do you think of your theory now?” Mr. Berkbigler asked Rogo when the chase had proved futile. Clearly, Berkbigler believed that the rock thrower had been discovered. To prove his point, no rocks were thrown the next evening. In fact, no rocks were thrown at the Berkbigler house again.

The End of the Investigation

Rogo ended his investigation and prepared to leave Tucson. At the airport, he telephoned the deputy in charge of the investigation to get an official police opinion on the lengthy episode. Did the police believe that the prowler was the rock-throwing culprit?

Not the police detective in charge of the case.

“We know the identity of the prowler,” the deputy told Rogo.

“Who is it?” he asked.

“I’m not at liberty to say,” the detective replied. “But I can tell you that the man had nothing to do with the stone throwings.”

Rogo guessed that the prowler had been an on-duty deputy, sent without the Berkbigler’s knowledge or permission. Why did he run away? As Rogo put it, “You don’t hold your ground and try to identify yourself when twenty angry people

are running at you with clubs, baseball bats, and rocks!"

Rogo was more convinced than ever that poltergeist activity explained the rock throwing—and so, apparently, did the police, for they had begun to collect evidence of a similar California incident in 1962. The investigation was over, though, since the Berkbiglers wanted to get on with their lives. Poltergeist or prowler? The Berkbiglers were certain that it had been a person, but it no longer mattered as long as the rock throwing had ceased.

On the other hand, Rogo believed the opposite. The activity had started and stopped suddenly. Rocks had fallen only when the Berkbiglers were at home. The accuracy of the aim was too perfect. Rocks were thrown repeatedly during all types of searches. And the family had seen rocks hurled from a bush when no one was near.

Rogo wrote his report, his theory never truly confirmed. Just another week in the life of a ghost hunter.

Part III

GHOST HUNTERS:

Scientists

The final category of ghost hunter is comprised of actual scientists: usually psychologists or parapsychologists who specialize in the study of the paranormal. Some are interested in poltergeists, some in "regular" ghosts. Some collect stories of real ghosts, others investigate actual hauntings. Their main objective is to approach a case with some healthy skepticism, present the facts, and investigate it as scientifically as possible. For example, a scientist will not use a seance as a means of investigating a haunting; he or she is more likely to use floor plans and questionnaires, as you'll see in this section.



10

Louisa E. Rhine: Case Studies of Four Ghosts

One of the most respected names in the field of parapsychology is the late Louisa E. Rhine, who was a researcher at Duke University's parapsychology laboratory. Professor Rhine collected and investigated countless reports of supernatural activities, many of which she reported in her books. What follows are four of the cases she investigated.

Case 1: The One-note Ghost

A young widow named Miriam, who was still in mourning over the sudden and unexpected death of her husband, contacted Rhine with her ghostly experience.

Miriam had been talking to her sister Janet one day about her husband's death, when she was overcome with grief. Out of respect for Miriam's

privacy, Janet left the room, as her sister collapsed on her bed.

"Glen, Glen," Miriam called to her husband, "if you are still alive somewhere, please, please let me know. Reach me some way. Give me some sign." Then she prayed, "Dear God, help me to know. Help me to be sure."

Immediately after her prayer ended, she heard a loud note sound from the downstairs piano. When it ended, the same note rang again. She wondered if her children who had been playing with their friends outside had entered the house and banged on the piano.

Then she heard Janet calling her.

"What's wrong?" Miriam asked.

"Nothing," Janet called from the front hall. "Only—were you just downstairs?"

"No, I'm upstairs—or I was," Miriam said, as she came down the stairs.

"I thought so," Janet said. Together they walked into the living room. No one was there.

"It's strange," Janet continued, "I heard a note on the piano, a pause, then the same note twice."

"I did, too," Miriam said. "In fact, I can still hear it ringing in my ears."

"Then who did it?" Janet asked. "Because I know I heard the piano, and no one's been in here."

Janet touched the piano's keyboard and found the note they had heard. She struck it firmly, and the sound filled the air.

"You know," Miriam said, "I had just been praying for a sign from Glen."

Janet clutched her sister's hand and laughed

self-consciously. "Well, you were asking if he were *A-live*, and the note we heard was A. That means he is."

Had Glen's ghost played the note twice on the piano? Had he given Miriam a sign? Miriam and Janet believed that he had.

Case 2: A Wedding Day Ghost

Rita Shepherd was so intrigued with an incident she found in her mother's diaries that she contacted Professor Rhine with the account.

When Rita's parents, Ed and Margaret McMillan were married in rural Utah shortly after the turn of the century, there were no automobiles for transportation and no telephones for communication. On their wedding day, Ed hitched a team of horses to the wagon and drove his new wife across two mountains to another town for a fancy wedding dinner. During the dinner, Ed was called from the table and handed a telegram which stated that Margaret's mother had died.

Because he did not want to spoil her wedding day, Ed did not tell Margaret what had happened.

"I want to go home," he told her.

"But it's after dark," Margaret said. "Can't we spend the night here?"

"No," Ed replied. "I want to go home right now."

Perhaps Margaret sensed the tone of urgency in his voice. Perhaps she could tell that something had upset him. Whatever she thought, she didn't question her husband further.

Their friends gave them a fresh team of horses,

and they began the long, dark trip through the mountains. Halfway there, a thunderstorm struck, and they found themselves surrounded by lightning.

And this is what Margaret reported the next day in her diary:

The rain came down in torrents amidst deafening bursts of thunder and piercing flashes of lightning. I was horribly frightened and somehow in the darkness we got off the road. Suddenly the horses lunged backwards and stopped still. At that moment a blaze of lightning emblazoned the scene and I saw my mother standing in front of those horses with her arms outstretched. We were at the very brink of a precipice which dropped straight down to the river far below.

Now I do not think this is to be an idle dream or fancy. I did not then know my mother was dead, but just as firmly as I have ever believed anything in my life I believe that Mother—in spirit—stopped those horses, thus saving our lives.

Margaret believed that her mother's ghost appeared to prevent her death. In this case, Professor Rhine wasn't so certain. Couldn't the horses have become aware of their predicament and lunged backward themselves without the appearance of a ghost? Couldn't Margaret have imagined her mother in the flash of a lightning bolt? Although Rhine had her suspicions, Margaret stuck to her story throughout her life and re-

corded it in her diary as a keepsake for her family.

Case 3: The Ghost's Letter

An unusual case was given to Professor Rhine by a college English professor. She had asked her students to write a brief narrative about an unforgettable experience in their lives. The professor was so stunned by one of the papers, by a student named John, that he gave a copy to Professor Rhine. Although she was unable to verify the episode, it remains an interesting possibility.

As a child, John lived with his family in Oregon where they managed a hotel. One morning when he was four, he said goodbye to his father who left for a business trip to New York City. While there, he died unexpectedly.

Two weeks later, John, who knew nothing about the alphabet or writing, found a pad of paper one evening and began to make marks on it. He went through three or four sheets of paper before his mother saw him.

"Stop wasting so much paper," she told him. "Why don't you find something else to play with?"

John obediently folded the papers, placed them in his mother's mailbox behind the hotel's front desk, and found something else to occupy his time. The next morning, his mother discovered the papers in her box and showed them to the clerk at the front desk.

"I think John wants to be a writer," she said. "Just look at all these scribbles."

The clerk, who was taking courses at night school, took a close look.

"That looks like shorthand," she said. "I just started a course in it last week."

"That can't be," John's mother replied.

"Let me take it to my teacher and find out," she said.

In fact, the clerk discovered that John's scribbles were an older style of shorthand. John had written a message with no stray marks or mistakes; everything made complete sense. The message began, "Dearest Beloved," which was a special term of endearment between John's father and mother. It then mentioned an unmailed letter and the location of a safe-deposit box.

As John concluded his English paper:

While he was a young man, [my father] had learned shorthand, the old-fashioned method. Mother still has those pieces of paper and the message has been translated by other people and is actually there. It was years later, when I was old enough to understand, that Mother told me the story and showed me the papers.

A shorthand letter from a ghost or a tall tale? How could a four-year-old boy produce such a letter unless he had been guided by his father's ghost? Of course, without seeing the actual papers herself, Professor Rhine couldn't be certain that John was telling the truth.

Case 4: Aunt Ann's Poltergeist

Ann Henderson died in 1958 at the age of ninety-seven. Ann's Virginia house and its furniture were left to her nephew George Preston and his family. Most people who inherit houses choose to sell them, but not George.

Shortly after they moved into Aunt Ann's house George went away on business, leaving his wife Charlotte and his sons at home. Late that night, Charlotte heard footsteps in the upstairs hallway, and wondered if her children were awake and fooling around. When she checked, she found them asleep in their beds. Perhaps because she was in a new residence, perhaps because she was alone, she considered another thought: a burglar had entered the house. She listened intently for any other sounds and plotted what she would do if she detected a robber: she would open her bedroom window and shout for the neighbors. She spent a sleepless night but heard no other noises. When George returned home and she related her experience, he wasn't particularly sympathetic.

A week and a half went by, and one night, George and Charlotte were in their bedroom, both reading. Around midnight they heard footsteps. George checked his sons, but they were sleeping. The footsteps continued for most of the night.

As Professor Rhine commented, here were two episodes that involved the sound of mysterious footsteps, apparently unrelated to the presence of

anyone in the house. The *sound* of footsteps can't be gathered as evidence of a ghost, and what one person thinks is a footstep may be a creaky old floorboard noise to another.

But other information needed to be considered—such as Aunt Ann's furniture.

Directly over George and Charlotte's bedroom was a large attic room in which most of Aunt Ann's furniture was stored. It was from this room that the footsteps were heard most often. They wondered if Aunt Ann was disturbed that her furniture had been piled into the storage room. So they had it removed to a storage warehouse. After that, they heard no more footsteps.

Still, other strange events occurred. Two happened while the Prestons were reading in their living room. One night, a large, rather old-fashioned bobby pin fell onto Charlotte's book and bounced into her lap. Charlotte looked up, but the ceiling was smooth and could not have hidden a hairpin. A few nights later, George had his feet propped on a large ottoman when it began to wobble violently as if someone were pushing it from below. Then it stopped just as quickly as it had begun.

One morning, Charlotte found herself covered with a blanket that she had put in the hall closet before going to bed.

"Thank you for putting that extra blanket on me," she told her husband. "It was colder than I thought."

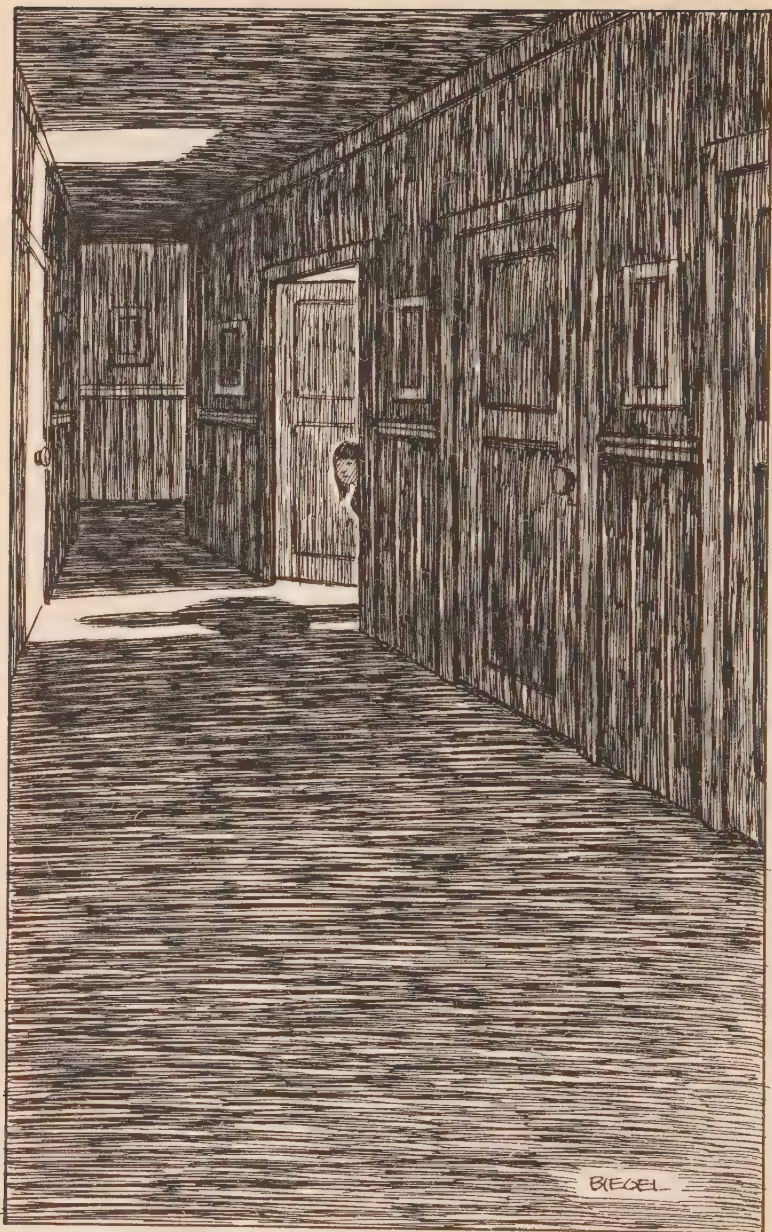
"I didn't cover you with anything," he said.

Another day, Charlotte was talking to a gardener outside when a tulip bulb smacked him on

the head. No one else was nearby. He was so stunned—and scared—that he was ready to quit his job.

Finally, Charlotte reported that, while she was sewing one day, she had heard a loud object fall and shatter into pieces, much like a mirror. Of course, nothing in the house appeared broken; nothing could explain the unusual noise.

Like most real hauntings, this one ended with a whimper. There were no major revelations, no terrifying episodes. There were simply questions: was Aunt Ann haunting the house? Or was Charlotte—the only person who was present at each incident—causing poltergeist activity?



BIEGEL

11

Colin B. Gardner: A Haunted Hotel

Colin B. Gardner describes himself as a parascientist, an occupation that applies science to the study of the paranormal. He investigates ghosts and hauntings as a scientist would, trying to document real cases involving apparitions. In short, a parascientist is another way of saying ghost hunter. Like Louisa Rhine, Professor Gardner has published a collection of hauntings filled with accounts reported to the Institute for Psychical Research, a research organization with which he is affiliated. Here is one case study from Gardner's book, *Ghostwatch*, about a special Canadian hotel.

A vacation for most people is an exhilarating experience. It's a time to throw caution to the wind and have fun before returning to the realities of everyday life. But in the case of Sonya Fourche, a fourteen-year-old Canadian girl, vacations could never be completely carefree. Sonya

was a diabetic who had to awake by eight o'clock each morning in order to give herself an injection of insulin. One of her and her family's worries about taking a vacation was relying upon a hotel's wake-up service.

One August not so long ago, Sonya and her family were staying in a hotel in the Canadian province of Alberta. They had spent a few weeks with relatives in Saskatchewan and were anxious to strike out on their own and see Banff National Park. Upon checking into the hotel, the Fourches arranged to have Sonya awakened promptly at eight o'clock each of the two mornings they would be there. They also asked the hotel to have a breakfast tray placed outside her door at the same time in order to discourage her from falling back to sleep.

The hotel was small, cozy, and friendly—hardly the type of place where a guest would think about ghosts. Sonya was assigned to Room 6, while her parents were given Room 8.

That night, after a busy day of sightseeing, the Fourches returned to the hotel about ten o'clock. Since the day had been tiring—and since Sonya's parents worried that Sonya might not want to get up the next morning at eight o'clock—Mr. Fourche stopped by the front desk.

"My daughter is staying in Room 6," he said. "She's supposed to awakened tomorrow morning at eight o'clock sharp. But she's very tired and I'm worried that she might sleep through the call."

"Don't worry, sir," the clerk assured him. "I'll leave a note for the night clerk. He'll let her

phone ring until she answers it. And if for some reason she doesn't, I'll have him contact you."

"It's very important that she get up at eight," Mr. Fourche added.

"I'll see to it that it's all taken care of," the clerk said.

Sure enough, the next morning Sonya's telephone rang precisely at eight o'clock.

"Good morning!" a female voice said cheerfully when Sonya had answered. "This is your eight A.M. wake-up call. Your breakfast will be outside your door in five minutes."

It was a cold August morning in Alberta. Sonya put on her robe and injected herself with insulin. By then, she could smell hot coffee and her breakfast sitting outside her door. Although she wasn't fond of getting up early, this at least compensated for it.

The Fourches spent another whirlwind day touring the province, trying to see as much as they could before they moved on to British Columbia the next day. At bedtime, Sonya told her parents that she was exhausted.

"But don't worry," she told them, "I'll get up at eight. Breakfast is too good to miss."

Again, the next morning, Sonya was awakened by the same cheerful voice with the same message: it was eight o'clock and breakfast would arrive in five minutes. Sonya didn't much feel like climbing out of her warm bed, but she did. She switched on the light, gave herself the injection of insulin, and waited for her breakfast to arrive. After a few more minutes, she opened the door, but found no breakfast waiting for her.

She was practically awake, so she decided to take a quick shower and get dressed. She hurried, fearing that her breakfast might get cold. Even so, she took fifteen minutes before she looked for her breakfast again.

Now she was angry, since it must have been almost a half an hour since she was awakened by the call from the front desk. She went to her parents' room and found them asleep.

"Come on, you guys," she told them, bouncing on the foot of their bed. "It's time to get up!"

"What time is it?" her mother asked sleepily.

"It has to be eight-thirty by now," Sonya said.

"Eight-thirty?" her mother questioned, reaching for her travel alarm. She held it close to read the time. "Oh, Sonya, it's barely five in the morning."

"Can't be," Sonya said. "I got my eight o'clock alarm call. And they never brought me any breakfast."

"Someone's been playing a joke on you," her mother said. "Just wait until I see the desk clerk. Go back to your room, honey."

When she returned to her room, Sonya checked her wristwatch, something she wished she had done first: it read 5:13 A.M. She was irritated by the thought that someone had called her three hours early. Because of their silly joke, she had injected herself three hours before she should have. Although that shouldn't cause a problem, insulin injections were nothing to fool with. Besides, now that she was awake and dressed, she was ready for breakfast. She sat in her room and

read until her parents called for her a little before eight.

The Fouches went straight to the front desk where they confronted the desk clerk.

"Good morning!" the clerk said, not suspecting that the Fouches were quite angry with her. "Anything I can do for you?"

"Yes, there is," Mrs. Fouché said. "My daughter is supposed to get an eight o'clock alarm call—"

"Ah, yes," the clerk interrupted. "We're running a little late this morning. I was about to make the call now, but as you are—"

"She did get a call," Mrs. Fouché explained angrily. "At five o'clock this morning. This is no joke. My daughter—"

"Please, Mrs. Fouché, there must be some mistake," the clerk said.

"Sonya," Mrs. Fouché said, looking expectantly towards her daughter, "tell her what happened."

Sonya did as her mother asked: she recounted the story of the 5:00 A.M. phone call.

"I want to see whoever was on this desk last night," Mr. Fouché said, when Sonya was finished. "I think at least an apology is required."

The desk clerk was puzzled by Mr. Fouché's suggestion and tried to answer it diplomatically. "Excuse me, Mr. Fouché, but there is no one on the desk until eight o'clock. In fact, the telephones are switched off all night so that none of the guests are disturbed by phones ringing. So I can't think how this—"

Then she stopped and suddenly remembered something. "Oh, wait a minute! Your daughter is in Room 6, right?"

Sonya nodded, but asked, "What does my room number have to do with this?"

The clerk smiled and replied, "Excuse me, please." She rummaged through a drawer below the counter and soon extracted a black book. She placed it on the counter and said:

"Might I offer a sincere apology? Now I realize what must have happened. It's happened before you see, but only ever in Room 6. We had a desk clerk who died in the hotel some years ago, and I am afraid she still seems to take her duties seriously every now and then. I wonder," she said, looking at Sonya, "if I could trouble you to write your experiences in this book. As you can see, many others have done so over the years."

"You mean to say my alarm call this morning was made by a . . . a . . . *ghost*?"

"Yes, miss," the clerk said quite cheerfully. "Quite definitely, yes!"

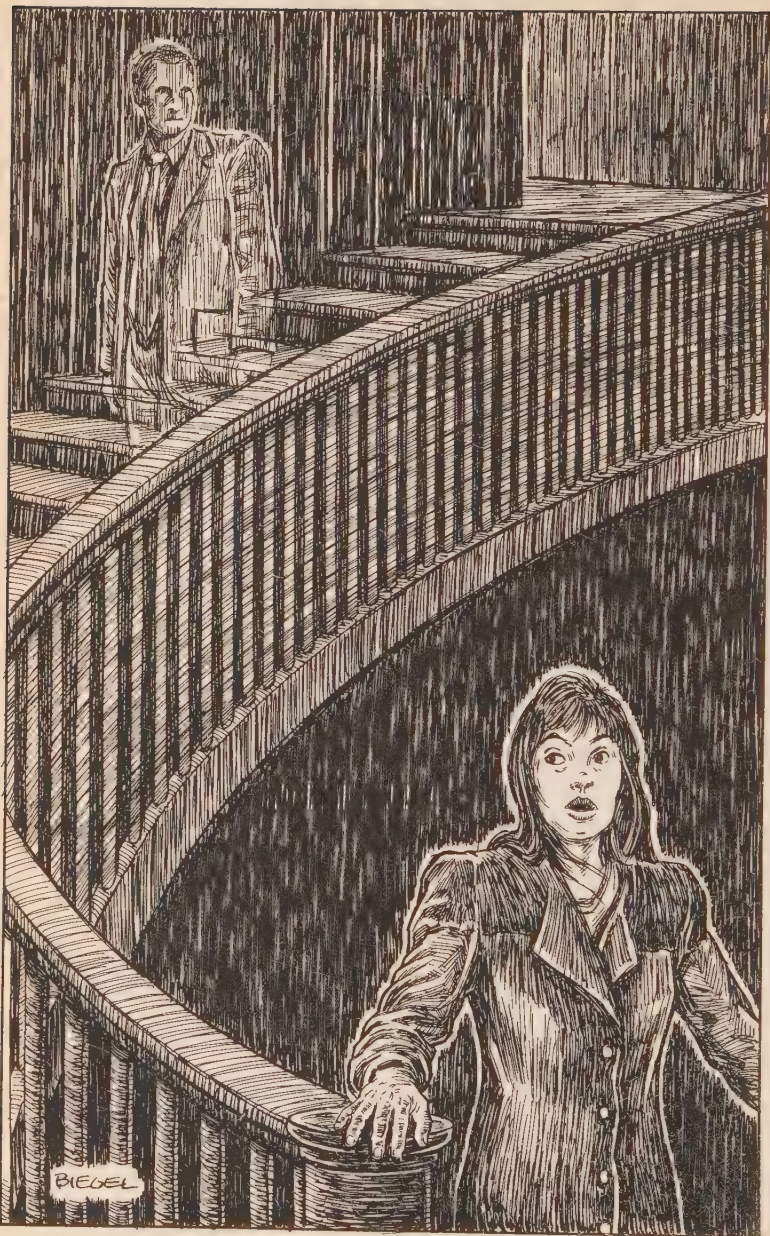
The Fourches were skeptical and decided against recording the story in the black book. Since they were checking out of the hotel anyway, they decided to let the matter rest until their vacation was over. Then Mr. Fourche telephoned the Institute for Psychical Research and reported the story.

A researcher for the Institute contacted the hotel, which gladly provided additional information and a look at the ghost book. As Colin Gardner reported at the conclusion of the case study, "We were able to inform Mr. Fourche later that,

while he was not alone in his doubt about the presence of a ghost, the evidence for a haunting was unshakable."

A thorough report, of course, would have included an on-site investigation of Room 6, in hopes of another early morning wake-up call. It also would have included the publication of the contents of the black book. What exactly were the other guests' experiences in Room 6? Had they too been awakened early by phantom phone calls? Or had some of them seen the ghost of the former desk clerk?

Perhaps one day researchers from the Institute for Psychical Research will conduct a more detailed investigation and publish a complete report of their findings.



BIEGEL

12

Gertrude Schmeidler: A Haunted House

One of the most influential—and scientific—ghost hunters is Gertrude Schmeidler, a professor at City College in New York City. Professor Schmeidler began her career as a psychologist. However, she began to develop an interest in the field of extra-sensory perception (ESP), which in the broadest sense includes the subject of ghosts.

By her account, the wildest paranormal experience she ever had involved a parapsychology class she was teaching. One day, her class was visited by Dr. Michael Grosso who brought with him a piece of a helicopter. The helicopter had crashed in South America, killing the pilot. Without telling the class anything else, Dr. Grosso passed the part from student to student and asked each one to relate any impressions they received from the part. Perhaps the students would have ESP regarding the helicopter crash.

When it was Schmeidler's turn, she suddenly

thought of high snowy fields in the Andes. She couldn't imagine, however, that a helicopter would fly in an atmosphere so thin. When everyone had had a turn, Grosso confirmed that Schmeidler—and some of her students—had been right; the helicopter had crashed in the snowy Andes.

Then, without warning, a bell in the classroom building began to ring at irregular intervals. It wasn't the beginning or end of the class, nor was it a fire drill or alarm, since those bells had a regular sound to them. Schmeidler, who had taught in the building for many years, had never heard the bell ring that way before. Since it never rang that way again and since no one could explain the odd occurrence that day, she wondered if the irregular ringing had anything to do with the helicopter part? Could the pilot's ghost have been trying to convey a message?

Such a possibility would be difficult to prove. But that has not stopped Professor Schmeidler from investigating hauntings in very precise and scientific ways. Her first published investigation concerned a haunted house.

The Haunting: A House with Presence

"I think my house is haunted," a friend told Schmeidler on March 24, 1965. "Are you interested?"

"Tell me more," Schmeidler said.

So her friend, who has remained nameless, told Schmeidler that for the last five years she had

lived in a sixty-year-old house. During the previous two and a half years, she had become aware of a presence in the house. She had not seen anything, but she felt someone's spirit. She had been skeptical at first, since she didn't see—only sensed—a ghost. But the more it occurred, the more she was able to define the presence. He—for she believed it was male—was perhaps forty-five years old and meek, gentle, and somewhat anxious. She had determined that the ghost wasn't related to any particular time of day, but it was related to only certain parts of the house. And the feeling she experienced when it was nearby frightened her. In fact, on a recent afternoon, when she had been playing the piano while alone in the house, she had become so frightened by the ghost that she ran outside to escape.

As the haunting continued, her daughter also experienced the same feeling. Once, she thought she had seen a vague black form on the stairs.

"I didn't tell you about this earlier," the friend told Schmeidler, "because I thought I was imagining it."

Even when her daughter began to confirm her mother's experiences, she didn't tell Schmeidler because "we pick up things from each other."

But two experiences convinced her to tell Schmeidler about the haunting. First, her son, who supposedly knew nothing about the haunting, began to have the same feeling, and he was not known for being intuitive. Then, a visiting friend, who was told about the haunting, said, "You're just making it up! It's ridiculous!" She paused a moment, before adding, "But if you *do*

feel something, I know where it is." Then she pinpointed the precise spot where the mother, the daughter, and the son had sensed the presence most often. This was enough to send the woman to her friend Gertrude Schmeidler.

Professor Schmeidler, who had never investigated a haunting before, agreed to look into the matter. However, by the beginning of April 1965, Schmeidler's haunted friend told her that she had spoken to the ghost.

"I told him not to come back anymore. The children and I are sure that the ghost is gone now."

The Preparations: A "Sensitive" Plan

Schmeidler was still interested in conducting the experiment. Perhaps her friend was wrong about the ghost's disappearance. Even if she wasn't, the ghost's previous presence might be detectable. In order to prepare her experiment, Schmeidler completed a series of three steps.

First, she had a set of accurate plans made for each floor of the house: the basement, as well as the first, second, and third floors. The mother, daughter, and son were each given a copy of the plans and asked to mark as precisely as possible each place where they had felt the ghost's presence. Afterwards, a researcher who was unfamiliar with the haunting or the purpose of the floor plans was asked to divide the floor plans into

half-inch square blocks. In all, there were 326 blocks when he finished. The blocked floor plans would be used in Schmeidler's experiment.

Second, Schmeidler developed a questionnaire based on the personality of the ghost. She included adjectives that the family had used in their descriptions of the ghost as well as adjectives that the family had not used.

Finally, Schmeidler decided to investigate the haunting by using sensitives; that is, people who are more sensitive to paranormal happenings. She located nine sensitives, seven women and two men, who thought they would be able to detect the presence of a ghost. Schmeidler believed that, if the sensitives experienced the same feelings as the family regarding the ghost's location and personality, such a presence might be real.

The Experiment:

Walking Through a Haunted House

Between April 11 and May 25, the sensitives visited the house one at a time, always accompanied by a researcher. The family was never at home, and Schmeidler herself checked to make sure that lights were turned on and appropriate doors opened. She also made sure that the family had not left any messages, such as "The ghost was seen here."

At the beginning of each tour of the house, a sensitive was handed a set of floor plans and instructed:

Mark each place where you feel the haunting. Make your marks very, very specific.... When you come out the back door with your marked floor plans, go to the garage. There you will be given the adjective checklist, and lots of blank paper for you to add whatever you choose.

In this way, each sensitive walked through the house, marked the floor plan, and completed the adjective checklist.

What did they find?

Ghost location: Two of the sensitives were able to detect a ghostly presence in almost the exact locations as the family had reported.

Ghost personality: Four sensitives were successful in matching the family's description of the ghost. Their descriptions included such adjectives as: calm, gentle, peaceable, quiet, mature, obliging, patient, trusting, and submissive. Interestingly enough, the two successful sensitives on the ghost's location were not successful in determining the ghost's personality.

The Conclusion:

A Figment of the Imagination?

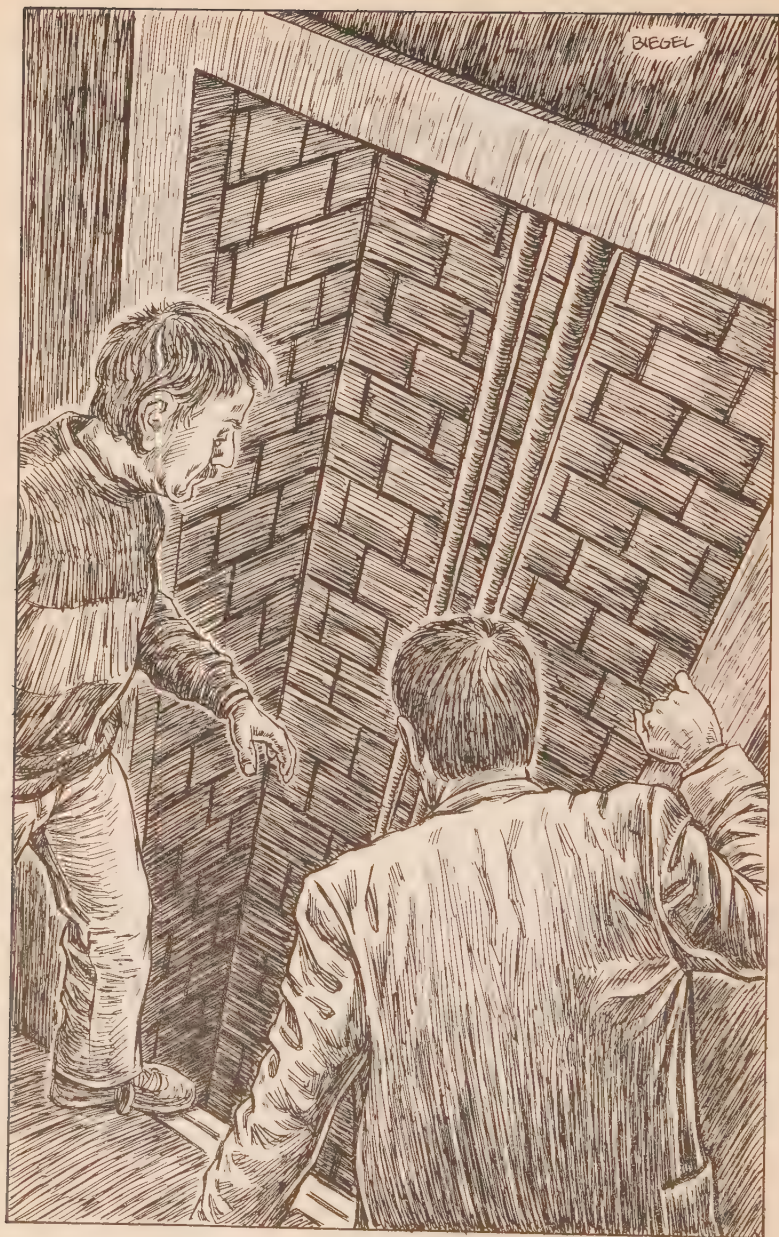
Was the house haunted? Schmeidler couldn't say from her experiment. She worried that the sensitives had developed certain feelings based on the furnishings and the lighting in the house. She was also concerned that the sensitives, rather than detecting the presence of a ghost, might

have simply been reading the minds of the haunted family—even though they were absent from the house. Schmeidler also wondered, if the house was haunted, who was haunting it. Although she tried to determine if a dead person was somehow related to the house or its building site, she was unable to do so. Since no one had actually seen a ghost or found a message from one, there were no clues to its identity.

One sensitive, Mrs. Eileen J. Garrett, reported after her house tour, "There is no ghost." She went on to say that Schmeidler's friend "might be producing the shadows" herself. Schmeidler, too, wondered whether her friend had somehow created the ghost in her mind.

Pioneering Ghost Hunter Gertrude Schmeidler was unable to answer this question, but she paved the way for future scientific investigations into the nature and substance of hauntings.

BIEGEL



13

Michaelleen Maher: A Haunted Apartment House

Nothing could be more intriguing to a ghost hunter than a haunted house—except perhaps a haunted apartment house. That's exactly what Michaelleen Maher, a professor at the New School for Social Research in New York City, found when she was contacted by a distraught owner of a two-story penthouse.

The woman, Mrs. Palmer, had recently purchased the apartment which was on the sixth and seventh floors of a quiet building. Unfortunately, as she renovated the apartment, she discovered from other residents that the apartment building—and, in particular, her penthouse—was haunted. Here are the details Maher pieced together after conducting fourteen hours of extensive interviews with the building's residents and employees:

The last resident of the penthouse was Mrs. Gemke, who also happened to own the apartment building. Mrs. Gemke had died in the music room of the apartment. Over ninety years old and a bit eccentric, she was terrified at the thought of dying in her sleep. Consequently, she had refused to sleep in her bedroom and spent most of her time in a recliner in the music room, where she took only an occasional nap. When she died, her body was taken from the penthouse down the elevator by two attendants from the morgue. Perhaps they were a little clumsy or careless, for they dropped her body on the elevator floor—an experience that horrified them.

"Take it easy," the elevator man advised them, "I don't think she can feel it anymore."

Mrs. Gemke's apartment was sealed just as it was at her death, as the lawyers began the difficult task of sorting through her affairs. Despite the fact that the penthouse was closed and off-limits to all employees of the building, a top-floor resident from a nearby building noticed that the penthouse lights were turned on occasionally in the middle of the night. He even telephoned the doorman to report this fact and his feeling that someone was in the apartment. This and the fact that her body had been dropped in the elevator caused a number of the apartment building residents to believe that Mrs. Gemke's ghost was haunting the building.

When Mrs. Gemke's estate was about to be settled, her apartment was placed on the market and a special preview for real estate agents was planned. To prepare it, cleaning crews were hired

to remove all of Mrs. Gemke's belongings and bring the apartment back to life. But three eerie events seemed to prove that Mrs. Gemke's ghost was haunting not just the penthouse but also its elevator.

Eerie Elevator Event 1

A week before the real estate preview, the night doorman received a telephone call from the superintendent.

"It looks like a bad storm's coming," the super said. "Go up to the penthouse, would you, and make sure all the windows are closed. I'm not sure the maintenance crew locked everything up."

The two-story penthouse had access to the elevator on the sixth and seventh floors. In fact, the elevator opened directly into the penthouse on each of the two floors. The doorman took the elevator to the sixth floor foyer and left the doors open. As anyone who has lived in an apartment building knows, nothing is more exasperating than waiting for an elevator to arrive. By keeping the doors open, he could be back at his post in the lobby in a few moments.

As he checked the two floors of the apartment, the doorman sensed a presence that made him feel uncomfortable. He felt that he was being watched. Still, he performed his duties, but on returning to the elevator foyer found the door closed. The elevator was still at the sixth floor, according to the indicator, but when he pressed the call button, the door would not open. Now he

had to walk down to the basement, retrieve the emergency key, and return to the sixth floor to unlock the doors. When he did, he was surprised to discover that only the heavy outer doors had closed. The inner elevator doors, attached to the elevator car itself, had remained open. This made little sense to the doorman, since the much heavier outer door would have been more difficult to move.

He reported the incident to the superintendent and the elevator was inspected by a repairman, who found nothing wrong.

Eerie Elevator Event 2

Workers spent the week before the real estate preview completing the final cleaning chores, even working through the night preceding the event. At 5:30 A.M., the building superintendent took the elevator to the penthouse to make a final check of their progress. The elevator doors opened onto the sixth-floor foyer, which was dark and gloomy thanks to a burned-out light bulb; it would have to be replaced before the showing.

As usual, he left the elevator door open so that he wouldn't have to wait for the elevator to make a return trip. He made his rounds through the penthouse, noting the shine that the workers had put on the brass doorknobs and the bathroom fixtures. He told William Corbin, who had just polished the ballroom floor with a heavy waxing machine, to return it to the basement storage room. Corbin began backing his way toward the

elevator, lugging the waxer behind him through the darkened foyer.

"No, Bill," the superintendent called, "put it in the elevator first. Then you get in. You'll never be able to push it out that way."

Corbin switched places and started to push the machine into the elevator opening. But the super realized something was wrong; the elevator was no longer there. The machine dropped into the shaft, pulling Corbin off-balance. The super raced to the elevator and grabbed Corbin by his neck. Both he and Corbin teetered at the edge of the shaft listening to the waxer fall seven floors to the basement. The men managed to grab onto the elevator cables and save themselves. Once they were safely in the foyer again, the super pulled the outer elevator doors closed and locked them.

In the next few minutes, as the super caught his breath, many things flashed into his mind. *I'm going to quit my job and turn in my keys. I'm not working in a building like this.* Then he began to wonder about the elevator. *What happened to it? Its brakes must have gone out. It fell to the basement.*

He could picture the damage: the elevator car was smashed beyond repair, and the heavy waxer had crashed through its roof, splintering the wood and perhaps even destroying the controls. He went to the basement to confirm the accident. He would have to report it to his boss and cancel the preview.

Imagine his surprise when he saw the waxer mangled at the bottom of the shaft. The elevator,

however, was not there. He peered up the dimly lit shaft and the elevator above him. He knew that when elevator brakes fail, the car *drops*—not rises—in the shaft.

Back in the penthouse, he rechecked the sixth floor elevator foyer. He opened the doors and saw that the elevator car was higher in the shaft. He climbed to the penthouse's second level. Using the emergency key, he unbolted the elevator security doors there and pushed them open. He saw the bottom half of the elevator car, raised part-way into the wheelhouse. Beneath the car, he saw the darkened shaft.

He called the repairman who had inspected the elevator earlier in the week.

"Could it have risen by itself into the wheelhouse?" he asked the repairman.

"No way," the man said.

"It happened," the superintendent insisted.

"Impossible," the repairman said.

In fact, another inspection revealed that nothing was wrong with the elevator. It was in perfect shape. Instead, as the repairman told the super, three things had to happen to operate the elevator. First, the outer doors had to be closed. Second, the inner doors had to be closed. Finally, someone inside the elevator had to push a button.

Who could have pushed the button? the super wondered. He came up with only one answer: Mrs. Gemke.

Eerie Elevator Event 3

Sometime after the real estate preview, Mrs. Palmer bought the penthouse. Because she planned extensive renovations to it, she decided not to move into the building until the work was completed.

One night, hours after the penthouse workmen had left for the day, the night doorman was in his basement office when the elevator buzzed. As night doorman, he also operated the elevator for residents. Entering the elevator, he looked to see which indicator was lit.

The sixth floor light was shining. The night doorman knew this was impossible. The workers had left, no one was living there. Besides, it was the middle of the night. Still, he decided he should check—with the repairs going on in the apartment on the sixth floor it was possible someone or something had snuck in the building undetected. He closed the elevator doors and pulled the old-fashioned lever, starting his trip upwards.

Without warning, the walls began to close in on him. He let go of the handle, trying to stop the elevator, but it continued to rise. He felt himself floating towards the ceiling. He sensed something—a form, a shape—and began to yell at it: "You can't do this to me. Stop!"

Suddenly, he found himself back in his office, sitting in his chair, wondering if the experience had been a dream.

"It really happened," he told Maher later. "I know it."

The Investigation

After Mrs. Palmer moved into the building, she began to hear all about Mrs. Gemke's ghost. Though she hadn't experienced anything unusual herself, she asked Maher and her associate George Hanson to get to the bottom of the supposed haunting. Using Gertrude Schmeidler's investigations as a guide, the investigators drew up an elaborate plan to determine if a ghost was present in the building.

First, an architect visited the building and drew floor plans of each floor, including the basement. On each floor, Maher numbered certain areas that may or may not have been the location of a ghostly encounter. In all, she marked a total of 143 areas, even though only thirteen had been related to the haunting.

Second, four sensitives and four skeptics (people who did not believe in ghosts) were invited to participate in Maher's investigation. Beginning on September 30, 1989, for four evenings, two people came to the apartment building each night. Each was given a copy of the floor plan. Then, one at a time, they followed a pre-set route through the building that led them past the 143 possible haunting sites. As they followed the "ghost-tour," sensitives were told to mark an X on the floor plan wherever they felt a ghost's presence; skeptics were told to mark an X at a site they thought a "ghost-believer" might see a ghost. After touring the building, each participant then completed a checklist of fifty-four

words or phrases that described possible ghostly activities. Of these items, eighteen had been used by residents or employees of the building to describe their encounters. Participants were told to mark any items that seemed to describe a ghost in the building.

Third, Maher looked at the results of the two experiments. First, on the floor plan test, both the sensitives and the skeptics were able to identify many of the haunting locations in the building. She wasn't sure, though, if they were sensing a ghost or if the thirteen ghost sites looked "spookier" or darker than other parts of the building. Second, on the checklist, only one person (a sensitive) was able to match the witnesses' descriptions of the haunting.

Fourth, she asked a professional photographer to take infrared pictures as he followed the route taken by the other participants. Altogether, he spent a total of seven hours photographing the building. When the film was developed, strange balls of light were detected on three rolls of film which were shot at four of the actual ghost sites. The photographer had even used two different lenses at each location, so dust or smudges were not to blame. The Kodak information center was asked to comment on the balls of light. Not only did the Kodak technicians have no idea how to explain the problem, they also managed to lose the negatives.

Finally, Maher wrote about her experience in a report presented to the 33rd Annual Parapsychological Convention. Was a ghost haunting the

building? Maher's experiment didn't prove that possibility. It only suggested that much more investigative work—with different techniques—was necessary.

Epilogue

Now that you've read about the experiences of thirteen real ghost hunters, you may be ready to start your own hunt.

Finding a ghost, though, isn't easy. Should you start hunting in a cemetery or an attic? Should you head for a haunted house in your neighborhood or stake out the nearest garden or park? Should you stay up all night or wait for one during the daytime?

The truth is: there is no best place to look. You might see a ghost in a cemetery or an attic, but you might also see one in your kitchen. You might discover a ghost in an old house, but you could also find one in a modern apartment or your local park. You might see one in the dark of night—or broad daylight.

You will be a more successful ghost hunter if you wait for a ghost to find you than if you search for one yourself. Even scientists and researchers rarely go hunting for ghosts. They only begin to search if someone asks them to investigate a

haunting that's already underway. Ordinary people, like Colonel Bushe and Mrs. Goodeve, are usually contacted by the ghost—rather unexpectedly—before they begin an exploration.

The real work of a ghost hunter begins once a ghost has been spotted. Is it a real ghost, or is it imaginary? Can you gather any proof that it exists? Can you write about your experience in a way that others can picture clearly?

If the thought of running into a ghost still frightens you a bit, remember that real ghosts are not scary. Only poltergeists—and ghosts in movies or on television—have the ability to harm someone. In fact, real ghosts are often reported to be surprised to stumble across a person. They have no plans to frighten anyone—not even you.

As a ghost hunter, your job will not be easy. But if you can learn from the experiences of the thirteen ghost hunters in this book, if you can explore the evidence without jumping to conclusions, you will be well on the road to examining the subject of ghosts scientifically. That's what being a real ghost hunter is all about.

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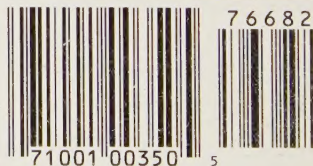
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